

# **WISCONSIN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN**

**Title IV-B, CAPTA, Adoption, Chafee Foster Care  
Independence, and Tribal Child Welfare State Plan for Federal  
Fiscal Year 2006**

**Annual Progress and Services Report for FFY 2005**

**Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Children and Family Services**

**September 1, 2005**

**Child and Family Services Plan  
Annual Services and Progress Report  
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## **I. Glossary of Acronyms for the Wisconsin CFSP**

Act 109 = 2001 Wisconsin Act 109 enacted in July 2002 that provided additional state statutory direction for implementation of AFSA and federal Title IV-E requirements

AFCARS = Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. Federal foster care data system to which states submit information. Source of permanency and placement data.

Area Administration = Department of Health and Family Services regional office staff in the Office of Strategic Finance that provide technical assistance to local child welfare agencies

ASFA = Adoption and Safe Families Act, particularly the ASFA requirement to pursue TPR after a child has been in OOH for 15 months

BMCW = Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare in DCFS, the state-operated child welfare agency for Milwaukee County

BPP = Bureau of Programs and Policies in DCFS, the state unit responsible for child welfare program policy and practice standards

BRL = Bureau of Regulation and Licensing in DCFS that licenses child placing agencies, child welfare facilities and child care facilities

CFSR = federal Child and Family Services Review

CFS 40 = DCFS form used to collect information on child abuse and neglect investigations previously used by Wisconsin to collect data for NCANDS purposes

Ch. HFS 44 = Proposed DCFS administrative rule on reasonable efforts and permanency planning

Ch. HFS 56 = DCFS administrative rule on foster home licensing

Chapter 48 = Wisconsin Children's Code

Chapter 138 = Wisconsin Juvenile Justice Code

Child Welfare Training Council = State body for coordinating child welfare training including DCFS, Counties, BMCW and the university-based Training Partnerships

Counties = County human or social service departments providing child welfare services

COKC = Court-ordered placements for which providers receive Kinship Care payments

CPS = Child protective services

CY = Calendar Year (January – December)

DCFS = Division of Children and Family Services, the state child welfare agency in Wisconsin

DHCF = Division of Health Care Financing, the state Medicaid agency in Wisconsin

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year (October – September)

HSRS = Human Services Reporting System. The Child Substitute Care module of HSRS was previously used by the state to collect data for AFCARS foster care purposes. The Adoption module of HSRS is still used to collect data for AFCARS adoption purposes.

ICWA = Indian Child Welfare Act

Kinship Care = Payment program to support children living with relatives

NCANDS = National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. Federal child abuse and neglect data system to which states submit information. Source of safety data.

OLC = Office of Legal Counsel in the Department of Health and Family Services

Ongoing Services Standards = The Ongoing Child Protective Services Standards and Practice Guidelines issued by DCFS that establish program standards for ongoing child welfare services

OOHC = Out-of-home care including children placed under court order in foster care, group homes, residential care centers and kinship care. Equivalent to the federal definition of foster care.

OPEP = Office of Program Evaluation and Planning in DCFS, the child welfare data office

PACE = A competency-based pre-service training curriculum for foster and adoptive parents

PEP = Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (equivalent to program improvement plan)

PEP Core Team = Statewide multidisciplinary group that developed the PEP

PEP Implementation Team = Statewide multidisciplinary group for implementation of the PEP

QA = Quality assurance program

PARC = Post-adoption resource center

Resource Center = New DCFS contractor for foster care and adoption resource center

SNAP = Special Needs Adoption Program operated by DCFS

Training Partnerships = University-based, regional child welfare training providers

TPR = Termination of parental rights

eWiSACWIS = Wisconsin Statewide Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS system)

eWiSACWIS Project Team = Staff supporting operation of eWiSACWIS system

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR TITLE IV-B, CAPTA AND CHAFEE**

### **Administering Agency for IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee**

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Children and Family Services  
1 West Wilson Street, Room 550  
P.O. Box 8916  
Madison, WI 53708–8916

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (Department) is an umbrella agency headed by a Cabinet-level Secretary. The Department has responsibility for the human service program areas of child and family services, mental health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse services, long-term support, aging services, medical assistance, and public health, among others. The Department organizational chart is attached to the plan.

The Department has delegated authority from the Governor's Office, as the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, to submit the Child and Family Services Plan and sign the required federal assurances.

Children and family services are located in the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS is the unit within the Department responsible for Title IV-B Subpart I (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart II (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). DCFS also manages the Title IV-E foster care program. The DCFS organizational chart is attached to the plan.

### **DCFS Organizational Structure**

The Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) manages the Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee programs and is responsible for supervising Wisconsin's child welfare program, including prevention, child protection, foster care, adoption, and independent living services. Services are delivered primarily through county- and tribal-administered child welfare programs, except in Milwaukee County and for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) which are operated by DCFS. BPP operates the SNAP and other adoption services, including special needs adoptive placements, adoption assistance, paternal interest registry, and adoption search. Adoption services are provided using regional offices statewide and in Milwaukee through the Milwaukee adoption program. BPP also manages the Kinship Care program, Runaway Services and Homeless Youth programs, Domestic Violence programs, Community Service Block Grant, and other programs.

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) directly manages child welfare services in Milwaukee County, the state's largest county. The state-administered services in Milwaukee County are delivered using DCFS staff for intake and initial assessment

functions in partnership with contracted service providers for in-home safety services, ongoing case management, adoption, and foster home licensing. BMCW delivers child protection, foster care, adoption, kinship care and independent living services in accordance with state policies established by BPP.

The Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) coordinates planning at the state level and is responsible for federal data reporting, program outcome monitoring, and state preparation for federal Children and Family Services Reviews and Title IV-E Reviews. OPEP includes the DCFS staff on the eWiSACWIS Project Team that manage the state child welfare data system.

Quality assurance activities are managed jointly by several units. BPP and BMCW have quality assurance staff that monitor program activity statewide and in Milwaukee County, respectively. Department Area Administrative staff in regional offices are also involved in child welfare program quality assurance on behalf of DCFS.

The Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL) is responsible for licensing child placing agencies, group homes, and residential care centers for children and youth and provides technical assistance regarding licensing. BRL also licenses group childcare centers.

The DCFS Bureaus and Offices coordinate all activities under the Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee programs. DCFS staff work together to develop, implement, and monitor federal and state child welfare policies and programs. Their shared knowledge of state, county, and tribal government agencies, private organizations, and local community resources supports comprehensive planning and programming across the full continuum of state and local child welfare services in Wisconsin.

### **Programs Included in the Child and Family Services Plan**

This Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006 Child and Family Services Plan includes Titles IV-B Subparts I and II, CAPTA, Chafee CFCIP and ETV, Adoption, and Tribal Child Welfare. The 2006 plan updates the 5-year child welfare program objectives established in the 2005 plan and describes how federal IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee funds will be used to accomplish the priorities in the plan. The plan also includes objectives for the Adoption Program, including how federal Adoption Incentive funds are used, and priorities for coordinating with the 11 federally-recognized tribes in Wisconsin on Indian Child Welfare services.

The plan provides information on the objectives and implementation activities related to Child Welfare Services(IV-B I), Safe and Stable Families (IV-B II) program services (Family Support, Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification Services, Adoption Promotion and Support Services), CAPTA program services, Chafee Independent Living and ETV program services, Adoption Program services, Tribal Child Welfare issues, and foster care services.

The plan includes the Annual Progress and Services Report describing activities through the current year, FFY 2005, for the IV-B, CAPTA, Chafee, Adoption, Tribal Child Welfare, and Title IV-E foster care programs. The progress report covers primarily activities by DCFS during calendar year (CY) 2004.

The DCFS operates under a comprehensive plan that establishes the priorities, strategies, and goals to carry out its mission. All requirements of 45 CFR 1357 are included within this plan.

### **Relationship to Child and Family Services Review**

Wisconsin underwent the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in 2003 and the federal CFSR report was received in January 2004. To address the issues identified in the CFSR, Wisconsin formed a Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) Core Team in September 2003 to begin work on a comprehensive plan to improve child welfare practice. The Core Team and other processes utilized for PEP input included counties, tribes, other departments, agencies or systems, consumers, advocacy groups, and other child welfare stakeholders. The work of the Core Team and other stakeholder input resulted in the Wisconsin PEP that was submitted in April 2004 and approved effective November 1, 2004. The Wisconsin PEP covers the period of November 1, 2004 through October 31, 2006.

During the PEP process, DCFS worked with stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Wisconsin child welfare program and opportunities for improving the effectiveness of child welfare services. The strategic planning process used to identify improvement strategies for the PEP was also used to identify objectives for the Child and Family Services Plan. Through this planning process, seven overarching values were identified and all of the state objectives for the CFSP are organized based on these values. The specific action steps identified in the PEP for implementation over the 2-year period are included in the CFSP along with long-term activities for child welfare program topics not related to the scope of the CFSR.

### **Child and Family Services Plan Contact Person**

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## **I. DESCRIPTION OF WISCONSIN CHILD WELFARE SERVICE SYSTEM**

The child welfare service system in Wisconsin is primarily a county-operated, state-supervised system in which the state oversees the program and provides policy direction and partial funding and county human or social service departments provide child welfare services to children and families. Counties also contribute local funding to the program. Tribes are involved in child welfare services directly and may also have written agreements with county agencies.

Two facets of the child welfare system are state-operated, including the adoption program for children with special needs by the Bureau of Programs and Policies and child welfare services in Milwaukee County by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

County agencies and other service providers, such as community based organizations, provide a wide variety of services to children and families. These services include programs designed to strengthen families, reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, and support and preserve families affected by abuse and neglect.

Child protective services include the investigation of child abuse and neglect, in-home safety services, and the removal of children from the home where necessary to protect child safety. Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes, also known as the Children's Code, governs abuse and neglect reporting and protective services and includes federal CAPTA requirements. The assessment and treatment of abuse and neglect and the removal of children from their homes are performed by child welfare agency staff based on statutory direction and state standards.

Children enter foster (out-of-home) care through two primary routes: protective services and juvenile justice. Out-of-home care placements include temporary shelter care, family foster care, treatment foster care, group homes, and residential care centers. All out-of-home care providers must be licensed and pass criminal background checks.

Protective service entries into out-of-home care occur as a result of abuse or neglect where removal of children from the home and placement into out-of-home care is necessary to protect the safety of the children. Caretakers can also seek voluntary placements for children for services related to developmental disability or physical or mental health issues requiring special care. Intake of children into care is done by child welfare agency staff with court approval. Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes also governs protective service and voluntary placements.

Juvenile justice entries result as youth display uncontrollable behavior (such as running away, truancy) or commit criminal offenses that result in a delinquency adjudication. Intake of youth into care is done by child welfare agency staff or by juvenile court staff, depending on the local administrative structure. Chapter 938 of the Wisconsin Statutes, also known as the Juvenile Justice Code, governs status offenses and juvenile delinquency.

While children are in out-of-home care, child welfare and juvenile justice agencies are responsible for permanency planning. Permanency goals include reunification where possible, adoption, guardianship, placement with a relative, or other living arrangements (i.e., long-term foster care, sustaining care, or independent living). Children in out-of-home care who are eligible for adoption through the termination of parental rights and who have special needs or are “hard to place” are referred to the state special needs adoption program where children are matched with adoptive parents. Adoption assistance payments are made to persons who adopt children with special needs. Older children who are likely to age out of out-of-home care receive independent living services to help them make successful transitions to adulthood.

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program is designed to help children make the transition from out-of-home care to self-sufficiency. The Wisconsin program is based on the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the findings of the June 2000 Wisconsin study entitled “Independent Living for Children in Out of Home Care.” The BMCW, counties, and tribes receive Chafee CFCIP and ETV funds to operate local service programs. Independent Living services focus on helping youth learn daily living skills, achieve a basic level of safety and well being that includes sufficient employment, housing, income, and education, and remain connected to caring adults and their communities for ongoing support. Program eligibility guidelines target youth aged 15-21 who have been in out-of-home care placement (e.g., foster home, group home, residential care center, or court-ordered Kinship Care) at least six months after the age of 15 years or older or adopted after the age of 15. Eligibility for Independent Living services ends when the youth turns 21 years of age.

The Kinship Care program is a financial assistance/child welfare program funded under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant. BMCW, counties, and tribes operate Kinship Care programs. The Kinship Care program was initiated in 1997 when the Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) component of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was terminated. The Kinship Care program is often utilized as a child welfare service to allow children to remain living within their extended family structure. Kinship Care may be used to fund voluntary living arrangements with relatives as well as child welfare placements with relatives where the court has found a child to be in need of protection or services. Court-ordered Kinship Care placements account for approximately 20% of the out-of-home care caseload in Wisconsin.

### **III. CHILD WELFARE OBJECTIVES FOR 2005-2009**

Wisconsin's five-year strategic objectives for improving child welfare services are reflected in this section of the plan. The objectives are organized based on seven overarching value statements. Under each value statement is a list of specific actions or initiatives that are or will soon be underway in partnership with counties, tribes, other departments, agencies or systems, consumers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders connected to the child welfare service system. DCFS will implement these initiatives during the period of 2005-2009, with the implementation guided by the seven values.

The initiatives reflect the program range of child welfare and family services activities for which DCFS is responsible, so many of the initiatives are not directly related to the use of federal IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee funds. The specific initiatives were developed through several processes. The list includes items from the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) approved effective November 1, 2004, Governor Doyle's Kids First agenda to invest in the future of children released in May 2004, and the Tribal Child Welfare Issues originally completed in February 2004 and subsequently updated. Other actions were identified as priorities for the CFSP by DCFS working collaboratively with counties, tribes, and other stakeholders that participated in PEP development and implementation. The source of each item is identified in parentheses.

For initiatives that involve federal IV-B, CAPTA or Chafee funds, more details about specific actions is described in Section VIII of the plan. More information about other initiatives is described in other documents:

- The PEP plan can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>.
- The Kids First agenda can be found at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docs/kidsfirst.pdf>.
- The Tribal Child Welfare Issues are attached to this plan.

#### State Objectives/Values Statements

##### ***1. Help families strengthen their capacity to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children:***

- Develop criteria, policies, and procedures that are designed to increase use of relatives as placement resources. (PEP-H)
- Enhance the role of non-custodial parents and other family members as placement resources by developing policies, procedures, and tools as well as increasing staff training to support efforts to locate, adjudicate, and involve non-custodial parents. (PEP-I)
- Reduce family violence by: (Kids First)
  - Improving coordination among law enforcement, child welfare agencies, corrections, and victim service agencies to effectively assess risks and respond accordingly.
  - Expanding Safe Haven sites, which provide a secure environment for visitation or transfer of custody of children.

- Seeking legislation to permit judges to impose a penalty enhancement to a criminal sentence if the perpetrator of domestic violence committed violent acts in front of children.
- Promote family-focused child welfare case planning by implementing the values and philosophy of coordinated service teams, revising the *Child Protective Services Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines*, developing policies and procedures, and amending pre-service training for staff and foster parents. (PEP Team, DCFS)
- Ensure culturally competent child welfare practice by recruiting and retaining bilingual and bicultural staff and foster and adoptive parents; incorporating cultural competency into existing training and developing specialized courses in assessing for cultural needs; and collaborating with organizations that serve culturally diverse client groups. (PEP Team, DCFS)

***2. Improve Wisconsin's capacity to provide quality foster care to children when they cannot be safe at home:***

- Stabilize placement of children in out-of-home care and reduce re-entry and placement disruptions. (PEP-C)
- Maintain and support family connections by updating and implementing policies that promote sibling group placement. (PEP-E)
- Increase the effectiveness of support for foster parents by:
  - Enhancing pre-service and continuing training and technical assistance. (PEP-K)
  - Establishing a foster care and adoption resource center that provides telephone support and referral, training for foster care coordinators, and increased training for foster parents. (PEP-K, Kids First)
  - Developing a Foster Parent Handbook. (PEP-K)
  - Clarifying roles and responsibilities of foster parents and facilitating their participation in court hearings. (PEP-P)

- Sustain a recruitment campaign that is consistent with the AdoptUSKids national initiative and designed to achieve a diverse ethnic representation of foster and adoptive families. (Kids First, CFSP)
- Improve the foster care reimbursement structure by:
  - Increasing the basic maintenance rate. (Kids First)
  - Revising the rate structure (e.g., supplemental points, sibling group incentives, use of the exceptional rate). (PEP Team)
- Increase the number and timeliness of special needs adoptions (PEP-D and PEP-O)
- Improve the effectiveness of permanency planning (PEP-D)
- Increase support for kinship providers caring for children (DCFS)
- Implement a subsidized guardianship program in Milwaukee with potential expansion to other counties and to tribes. (Kids First, DCFS)
- Finalize adoptions for children needing permanent homes by providing permanency consultation, improving the timeliness of finalized adoptions, and evaluating the array and effectiveness of post-adoption services. (DCFS)

***3. Strengthen and diversify the child welfare workforce and build our capacity to serve families and keep children safe:***

- Establish minimum pre-service and foundation training requirements for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors. (PEP-R, Kids First)
- Develop additional options for county and tribal access to child welfare training, including use of technology and supplemental training providers to meet training requirements for staff and supervisors. (PEP-R, Kids First)
- Identify and address ongoing training needs related to eWiSACWIS. (PEP-R)
- Evaluate the caseload and workload of child protective services staff and supervisor to caseworker ratios. (PEP-T)
- Research the factors contributing to turnover in the child welfare workforce and implement strategies to improve staff recruitment and retention. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Produce a Child Welfare Policy Manual for child welfare staff. (PEP Team)
- Increase efforts to develop and support supervisors. (PEP Team)
- Meet with Schools of Social Work to establish a match between current curriculum and Child Welfare Training Partnership's foundation training to further refine equivalencies or criteria for exempting staff from required training. (PEP-R)
- Improve practice in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (DCFS)

***4. Assure that the expectations of families and actions of child welfare professionals are guided by clear and comprehensive policies and standards of practice:***

- Improve the safety of children and the efficiency of and consistency among child welfare programs statewide by defining the scope of CPS cases and the intake and assessment standards that guide caseworkers. (PEP-A)
- Update the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* on safety assessment and safety planning to help children remain safely at home. (PEP-B)
- Develop a policy to require a concurrent permanency plan no later than the first annual permanency plan review to move children more quickly to permanency. (PEP-D, PEP-O)
- Integrate the foster/adoptive family assessments into one and distribute the new assessment tool to counties for use in licensing foster and treatment foster homes under Chapters HFS 38 and 56, Adm. Code, and for the Adoption Program. (PEP-D)
- Promote interaction among family members and siblings by developing and implementing policy on family visitation and interaction. (PEP-F)
- Improve compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) by building DCFS capacity to implement ICWA and ensuring that all parties in the child welfare system are aware of and comply with ICWA requirements. (PEP-G, DCFS)
- Revise the *CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines* regarding family assessment and case planning and convert family assessment practice guidelines to standards. (PEP-J, PEP-N)
- Develop and implement a policy on caseworker-parent/family face-to-face contact. (PEP-J)
- Work with children's mental health professionals and county and tribal child welfare agencies to develop a statewide policy for mental health screening, assessment, and treatment and develop a treatment capacity improvement plan. (PEP-M)
- Develop policies (Chapter HFS 44) relating to reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of children from their homes and to return children placed in out-of-home care to their homes when appropriate and safe or be placed in permanent and stable alternative living arrangements. (PEP-N)
- Implement the DCFS child welfare legislative agenda (including eWiSACWIS confidentiality, further implementation of ASFA, TPR process improvement, and other priority legislation). (PEP-O, Kids First)
- Increase the DCFS capacity to provide technical assistance to local child welfare agencies to support improved case practice, policy implementation, and regional collaboration. (PEP-S)
- Review the current use of "substantiating" child abuse and neglect and its ongoing practicality in Wisconsin's child welfare system. (PEP Team)
- Review the CPS role in non-caregiver maltreatment. (PEP Team)

- Develop a process and protocol for conducting reviews of cases involving the death or serious injury of children due to abuse and the involvement of children in egregious incidents. (DCFS)

***5. Collaborate with agencies and systems to improve family access to services that ensure children are safe and healthy:***

- Pilot a managed care program in Milwaukee that will provide every child entering foster care with mental, physical, and dental health care. (PEP-L)
- Assess the capacity of the Wisconsin child welfare system to respond effectively to the safety and permanency needs of children. (PEP-T)
- Expand MA eligibility for youth exiting out-of-home care at age 18 or older up to age 21 to ensure ongoing health insurance coverage. (Kids First)
- Increase Independent Living Program scholarships to \$5,000 per youth per year as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. (DCFS)
- Help youth transition to self-sufficiency by continuing to provide an array of services and supports that address secondary and post-secondary education, vocational and employment training, daily living skills, housing, connection to caring adults, health education, and risk prevention. (DCFS)
- Build Independent Living Program capacity to provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other supports and services to former foster care youth aged 18-21. (DCFS)
- Strengthen coordination with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) on W-2 (TANF) services to families involved in the child welfare service system. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Establish multi-agency work groups with other agencies and service systems to improve service delivery to children and families. (PEP Team)
- Improve mental health services for children served by the child welfare system. (DCFS)
- Improve availability of and access to AODA and other services for birth parents. (DCFS)
- Collaborate with the Department of Corrections (DOC) on services to juveniles and their families. (DCFS)
- Expand Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Voucher programs to include the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe. (DCFS)
- Sustain the partnership with counties, tribes, advocates, consumers, and other stakeholders to improve child welfare outcomes through membership on or other involvement with: (DCFS)
  - Child Welfare Program Enhancement Plan Implementation Team
  - Milwaukee Partnership Council
  - Citizen Review Panels

***6. Improve the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate safety, permanence, and well being of children:***

- Develop a policy for processing multiple CPS reports for the same incident or episode of alleged maltreatment. (PEP-A)
- Improve the management of child welfare information systems and reporting of child welfare program data. (PEP-Q, DCFS, PEP Team)
  - Obtain federal certification of the eWiSACWIS system.
  - Integrate management of eWiSACWIS system into DCFS.
  - Develop a comprehensive eWiSACWIS training program.
  - Develop child welfare program performance indicators.
  - Support local agency use of eWiSACWIS data reports.
  - Improve quality of federal AFCARS and NCANDS reporting.

***7. Assure the quality and effectiveness of services for children and families by regularly reviewing our programs and practices:***

- Establish a statewide child welfare quality assurance (QA) program to improve practice and accountability. (PEP-Q, Kids First)
  - Agency review using CFSR-style case reviews and peer reviewers.
  - Coordination of statewide and Milwaukee QA processes.
  - Program reviews and special studies.
  - QA feedback into policy development.
  - Technical assistance to child welfare agencies from DCFS.
- Implement an ombudsman program for children served by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (Kids First)
- Ensure compliance with federal and Legislative Audit Bureau Title IV-E eligibility reviews. (DCFS)

## **IV. ANNUAL SERVICES AND PROGRESS REPORT**

### **Progress on Objectives in 2005-2009 Plan**

The DCFS established several objectives in the CFSP for 2005-2009 supporting the quality, timeliness, and responsiveness of child welfare services across Wisconsin. The annual progress report includes information on accomplishments of these objectives during FFY 2005, with an emphasis on activities during calendar year (CY 2004). The progress report is divided into sections dealing with the seven overarching child welfare program goals for 2005-2009, specific program updates, and the seven systemic factors for the federal CFSR process. Some of the activities related to the overarching goals are included in the program updates or systemic factors where appropriate.

### **Child Welfare Program Goals**

#### ***1. Help families strengthen their capacity to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children:***

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps H, I and J. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide specific information for each of these items.
- DCFS is working with the Governor's Office, the Department of Justice and domestic violence service providers to take actions to reduce family violence.
- DCFS continues to promote the coordinated service team approach to case planning with families and uses IV-B Subpart II funds for this project.
- DCFS continues to emphasize cultural competence in the recruitment and training of child welfare staff and foster/adoptive parents.

#### ***2. Improve Wisconsin's capacity to provide quality foster care to children when they cannot be safe at home:***

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps C, D, E, F, H, K, N and P. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- DCFS is working with AdoptUSKids national initiative to increase the number and diversity of foster/adoptive families.
- The basic foster care rate will be increased on a permanent basis in 2006 and DCFS is exploring ways to use the rate structure to better support placements.
- DCFS is implementing a subsidized guardianship program using a federal Title IV-E waiver.

#### ***3. Strengthen and diversify the child welfare workforce and build our capacity to serve families and keep children safe:***

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps R and T. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.

- DCFS is working with the Training Partnerships to expand both the type of training provided and the ways in which training can be delivered.
- DCFS is working with national consultants to address workforce development for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and statewide as well.
- DCFS will continue efforts to develop and support the practice skills of child welfare staff and supervisors.

***4. Assure that the expectations of families and actions of child welfare professionals are guided by clear and comprehensive policies and standards of practice:***

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps A, B, D, F, J, M, N, O, and S. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- DCFS will continue to work with counties and other stakeholders to evaluate child maltreatment case findings and the role of child protective services, particularly for incidences of non-caregiver maltreatment.
- Through the availability of funding for the PEP, DCFS can provide increased technical assistance to local agencies.

***5. Collaborate with agencies and systems to improve family access to services that ensure children are safe and healthy:***

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps L and T. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- DCFS has expanded Independent Living program scholarships and will continue to seek legislative approval to expand Medical Assistance eligibility for youth aging out of out-of-home care.
- DCFS is collaborating with the Departments of Workforce Development and Corrections to coordinate child welfare and other services to low income families.
- DCFS is committed to sustaining partnerships with counties, tribes and other stakeholders through an inclusionary approach to program management and the use of advisory committees.

***6. Improve the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate safety, permanence, and well being of children:***

- DCFS is continuing to improve the quality of child welfare program data for federal reporting and state purposes.
- DCFS completed statewide rollout of the eWiSACWIS system and will continue to provide support to system users to improve efficiency of system operation.
- DCFS will work toward federal certification of the eWiSACWIS system.

***7. Assure the quality and effectiveness of services for children and families by regularly reviewing our programs and practices:***

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Step Q. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for this item.
- DCFS implemented an ombudsman program for families served by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.
- Wisconsin passed a federal Title IV-E eligibility review in May 2005.

## **Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services**

Title IV-B Subpart I is a federal block grant that can be used for a broad range of child welfare services. In Wisconsin, Subpart 1 funds are used for the Community Aids, Youth Aids, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs. A small amount of Subpart I funds are also used for DCFS state program operations.

### Community Aids

The Community Aids program is the state mechanism to provide county human and social service agencies in Wisconsin with funds for a variety of human services. Subpart 1 funds are included in Community Aids to give county agencies resources to provide child welfare services. Other funds that are part of Community Aids used for child welfare services include Social Services Block Grant funds, Title IV-E revenue earned based on expenses incurred by the state and counties, and state tax dollars. The Community Aids funds are used by county agencies for child welfare services and other services to children and families. Counties are required to provide a local match to Community Aids, with most counties providing more than the minimum amount of match. The county match is the primary source of state match for the Subpart 1 funds.

*Progress report:* Since the Title IV-B Subpart I funds are part of the larger Community Aids program, it is not possible to attribute specific program results to the Title IV-B Subpart I funds. The Community Aids program was continued in 2004 with no major changes. A description of the Community Aids program is available at:

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/Informationalpapers/47.pdf>

### Youth Aids

The Youth Aids program is the state mechanism to provide county human and social service agencies in Wisconsin with funds for community-based juvenile justice services. Subpart I funds are included in Youth Aids to give county agencies resources to provide child welfare services to the juvenile population, including community services to prevent placement, placement services, and post-placement aftercare services.

*Progress report:* Since the Title IV-B Subpart I funds are part of the larger Youth Aids program, it is not possible to attribute specific program results to the Title IV-B Subpart I funds. The Youth Aids program was continued in 2004 with no major changes. A description of the Youth Aids program is available at:

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/Informationalpapers/55.pdf>

### Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Program

Subpart I funds are used, along with other state, local, and federal funds, to support services to 23 runaway and homeless youth programs and seven Second Chance Homes

throughout the state. The goals of the Runaway Services Program are to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent, stable homes for youth. Services provided as part of the Runaway Program include a 24-hour crisis intervention hotline and safe shelter, counseling for youth and families, and education, prevention, outreach, and aftercare services to youth and their families.

2001 Wisconsin Act 69, which took effect April 26, 2002, provides for the licensing of Second Chance group homes for teen parents and expectant mothers in need of safe and structured living arrangements. The law was enacted in response to the rising number of teen mothers who need shelter and assistance in raising their newborns while attempting to finish school and obtain stable employment to support themselves and their children. Second Chance Homes are supervised, nurturing residences for teen custodial parents who have no other place to go. In most cases, these teens have experienced abuse, neglect, substance abuse, or other difficult circumstances in their families-of-origin, making it impossible for them to remain at home. Second-chance homes are designed to provide them the services they need to become self-sufficient and caring parents. The homes help young parents complete their education, secure sound employment, break the cycle of child neglect and abuse, and set goals for a more promising future.

*Progress Report:* During 2004, Wisconsin's runaway programs served over 3,290 youth face-to-face, provided over 1,930 families with counseling, temporary shelter for approximately 763 youth and received 5,282 telephone contacts from troubled youth. Of the youth personally counseled, at least 96.7% were either reunited with their family or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

In 2004, the Wisconsin Association for Runaway Services was given a grant for \$13,500, to provide a statewide project to increase staff awareness, sensitivity and capacity to serve lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans-gendered and questioning (LGBTQ) youth and to further emotionally safe environments for LGBTQ youth to access and receive services in 2005. The association will be working extensively with runaway and homeless youth agencies, providing materials and sensitivity training to runaway programs and homeless pregnant and parenting teen service providers in Wisconsin. LGBTQ youth will be involved from the onset of the project in both program and material design and project implementation

It is estimated that one in ten individuals nationally consider themselves LGBTQ and this percentage is much higher among runaway and homeless youth. The longer a youth is on the street, the more likely it is that they will resort to "survival crimes" such as prostitution and theft. Consequently, there is a greater likelihood that they would be arrested and become part of the juvenile justice system. LGBTQ youth are especially vulnerable in correctional settings, where they are often physically and verbally abused. Runaway programs provide these teens with safe alternatives before they enter the system. Runaway and homeless youth (especially LGBTQ teens) are at extremely high risk for contracting HIV/AIDS. Outreach and project staff offer prevention, counseling, and referrals for treatment to youth who are often out of touch and mistrustful of traditional services. Intensive training through the WAHRS project will ensure all staff are able to offer LGBTQ youth safe alternatives in a non-threatening environment

## **IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

### Introduction

The Wisconsin Program for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) is administered by the BPP and has four components: family preservation, family support, time-limited-reunification services, and adoption promotion and support. The first three are delivered or arranged for by county agencies. Adoption promotion and support services are provided at the state level through the BPP Adoption Program, and a small portion of the grant is used to fund three statewide grants.

Subpart II funds are allocated to counties to operate local PSSF programs with preservation, support, and reunification programs. These local PSSF programs operate throughout the state in a decentralized manner. In several counties, the PSSF program is incorporated into the Brighter Futures Initiative (BFI), which focuses on improving outcomes for children and families through prevention efforts involving funds from several sources. Building on local collaboration and community-wide planning efforts, PSSF program service delivery involves various stakeholders within each of the counties. Wisconsin continues to work with counties to strengthen collaborative efforts and leverage additional dollars at the local level.

While local operation of the PSSF program is a cornerstone of its unique implementation in Wisconsin, each local agency under contract with the state is responsible for meeting the following requirements:

- Provision of family preservation, family support, and time-limited reunification services designed to promote child and family well being. To meet the IV-B Subpart II fiscal requirements for preservation, support, and reunification services, local agencies are required to dedicate the required portion of their total PSSF program funds to each of the three service areas.
- Development of implementation plans that include measurable outcomes that meet funding allocations for support, preservation and reunification, as defined by the federal requirements.
- Comprehensive, active involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
- Submitting an annual plan report that includes levels of achievement in meeting their identified outcome measures and an expenditure report showing actual expenditures in support, preservation, and reunification.

The adoption component of PSSF is delivered by the state Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and PSSF funds are combined with other state and federal dollars to locate families to provide safe, permanent homes for children who cannot achieve

permanence with their biological parents. The progress report and plan for the adoption component of PSSF can be found in the adoption section of this plan.

### Program Funding and Planning

Wisconsin also provides state funding in the form of the IV-E Incentive program to counties for activities that will improve outcomes for children and families. Services/programs provided by this program are consistent with, or complement, services eligible for PSSF funding. The state strongly encourages counties to submit joint PSSF/IV-E plans and most of the counties do this. Collaborative efforts involving these two programs allow the enhancement of both the level and amount of services provided. The IV-E Incentive program allocates discretionary IV-E revenue claimed by the state to county child welfare agencies to provide prevention and intervention programming for children, youth, and families.

- Wisconsin received increases in PSSF funding for FFY 2003 and FFY 2004 and DCFS is distributing the majority of those increased funds to counties for local PSSF program services through the local annual allocations. The full effect of the increased funds is reflected in the CY 2005 allocation. In addition, Wisconsin increased the funding to counties under the IV-E Incentive program for CY 2005.
- In determining the CY 2005 PSSF allocations, DCFS identified the need to review the procedure for allocating funding to counties. When distributions were derived prior to CY 2005, they were based on local plan requests. In some instances, there was a significant variance in these requests. Subsequently, many of the counties that requested smaller amounts have asked for funding at the same level as some of their peer counties. Until FFY 2004, DCFS did not have sufficient additional funding to adjust county allocations without significantly reducing some counties. The increase in the IV-B Subpart II federal grant allowed DCFS to adjust county allocations and provide greater equity in the county allocations. The new formula increased the minimum county allocation from \$15,000 to \$35,000 and increased the maximum allocation from \$75,000 to \$100,000.

The primary goals for the formula were to: 1) Hold counties harmless and not have any county suffer a reduction in funding, and 2) and to have the allocations equitably based on appropriate criteria. DCFS succeeded on both counts. No county suffered a reduction and the new allocation formula is based on the number of children residing in the county. In addition to the reallocation, all counties received an increase of 3% for CY 2005. This increase in PSSF funding to counties has allowed counties to enhance programs, increase services levels, and /or add new programs. While these new funds are important to all counties, they are particularly important to rural, sparsely populated counties that have such limited resources.

- Counties completed a three-year plan in late 2004 covering the period of CY 2005 – 2007 for the additional PSSF funds and the increased IV-E Incentive funds. DCFS held regional meetings with counties to provide technical assistance in the development of their 2005-2007 PSSF/IV-E plans including measurable outcomes. Individualized assistance was provided to counties to help complete plans or revise their plans to obtain state approval. The plan instructions can be accessed at:

[http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/dcfs\\_info/num\\_memos/2004/2004-22.htm](http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/dcfs_info/num_memos/2004/2004-22.htm)

### PSSF Program Progress Report

The focus of the Wisconsin PSSF program has been to ensure that program services improve outcomes for all children and families in Wisconsin, but especially for those that are in the child welfare system or at high risk of entering the system. As new child welfare policies, standards, and procedures are developed and implemented statewide (with the goal of improving safety, permanence, and the well being of children and families), PSSF service providers are expected to coordinate services and target populations in ways that improve child welfare program outcomes.

- In calendar year 2004, over 37,000 children and 33,600 families received PSSF preservation, support, or reunification services from county agencies. The counts are taken from the annual PSSF program reports submitted by counties to DCFS. Note: These numbers do not include the families and children served with PSSF funds in BFI counties.
- Particular attention has been paid to the time-limited reunification and adoption elements of PSSF. Based on the results of the outcome measures, counties have succeeded in achieving reunification goals for children and families served with PSSF funding
- PSSF has partnered with other DHFS programs to provide funding for the Coordinated Services Team Initiative (CST). The CST approach promotes a system change in the way services are delivered to children and families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems. Funding, training, and technical assistance are provided to counties to maximize the use of existing resources that support collaborative efforts resulting in a clear vision, meaningful structural change, and measurable outcomes for children and their families across systems. This program has continued to expand to more counties and several counties are including new or expanded CST programs in their 2005-2007 PSSF/IV-E Incentive Plans
- The 2001 PSSF program amendments encourage states to provide services to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages under the family support services portion of the PSSF program. PSSF program operators have been advised they can use PSSF funds for services to strengthen families. The 2005-2007 PSSF plan instructions encouraged counties to use this funding to implement and expand family based services and planning in order to strengthen families. As

Outcome training has been provided to local programs, counties have become much more proficient in utilizing a results-based approach in developing local plans and identifying “what works.” They have become much more skilled at identifying what programs achieve the best results for the children and families they serve. Counties are now taking the next steps and are using these results in reviewing contracted services to make funding decisions.

- Wisconsin received an increase in the PSSF federal grant in FFY 2004, but due to the timing of the notice and efforts needed to determine and implement a new allocation formula for counties, the increase in funding to counties did not take place until CY 2005. Wisconsin used the increase in the 2004 PSSF award for several statewide activities to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being of children in Wisconsin. Some of the funding will be used to develop improved safety and permanency curriculum and training will be provided to all CPS workers in Wisconsin. Funding is being provided to expand our Fatherhood Initiative, fund paternity determination activities and contribute to a Female Offender Project to connect mothers and children when the mother is incarcerated and to assist with reunification when she is released. Any remaining funds will be used to fund additional PEP related activities.

#### PSSF Program Goals

Both State and County agencies continue to enhance program goals, accomplish identified outcomes, and develop and implement an evaluation component. The required outcomes DCFS is focusing on will enable us to document reductions in the:

- rate of recurrence of child maltreatment
- number of children re-entering out-of-home care
- length of time children spend in out-of-home care per episode

## **IV-B Program - Current Federal Initiatives**

### Introduction

Under the Title IV-B Subpart I and II programs, most of the funds are allocated to county and tribal agencies for services at the local level. Local agencies are given broad discretion with Subpart I funds allocated as part of the Community Aids allocations to counties and within required service categories for the Subpart II funds, which are a separate PSSF program allocation. Local agencies assess their needs and may use their combined IV-B funds to meet local service priorities.

Under the Subpart II PSSF program, county agencies are required to have local planning committees. Local committees are broad-based and include a wide array of community representatives, including law enforcement, schools, the faith community, private provider agencies, local social services, and many others. Counties supplement the IV-B funds received from the state with other state and local funds to support their overall service delivery system for children and families.

The Administration for Children and Families has identified a number of national Executive Initiatives for which states may use IV-B funds. Since Wisconsin allocates funds to local agencies and allows local agencies to develop program plans based on their unique local needs and resources, DCFS does not have statewide programs funded with IV-B monies specifically to address these federal initiatives. However, many of the local plans include elements of these federal initiatives.

#### *a. Healthy Marriage*

Many local programs use the support portion of their PFFS grants to fund parenting programs at local family resources centers, home visitor programs, and other parenting initiatives. In addition, both preservation and reunification programs fund family counseling that focuses on strengthening relationships, including parental relationships.

#### *b. Responsible Fatherhood*

Many local agencies have adopted Fatherhood Programs or made existing programs more “father friendly.” The State has used PSSF dollars to fund the development and piloting of a “father friendly” assessment tool. In addition, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare continues to work to strengthen efforts to identify fathers and connect children and fathers.

The DCFS is allocating PSSF monies to expand fatherhood activities: 1) to enhance efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the CPS system; and, 2) to develop protocols that provide technical assistance and service assessments to counties/agencies that assist in removing barriers to create father friendly programs and services. Several counties included specific

fatherhood programs in their 2005-2007 plans and, for the first time, one of our counties is using funding for genetic testing to identify fathers.

As part of Wisconsin's response to the federal CFSR, DCFS is implementing an initiative to strengthen the relationships between non-custodial fathers and their children in the child welfare system. A series of focus groups has been held in several counties with fathers who have children in the child welfare system. The data obtained at those meetings will be formatted and presented statewide so that all counties will have information they can use develop programs and remove barriers with the goal of strengthening bonds and enhancing the relationships of children in the child welfare system and their non-custodial fathers.

### *c. Youth Development*

Using a combination of PSSF/IV-E incentive funding, counties support a number of programs for youth. Several counties are participating in the Brighter Futures Initiative, which focuses on positive youth development and coordination or prevention services funded from multiple sources, including PSSF. Some of these programs may focus on kids who are in out-of-home care, or have recently returned from out-of-home, some of them are directed at high risk youth and others serve the general youth population.

Local programs use these sources of funding to provide after-school programming, mentoring programs, grants to local schools and community groups for youth programs, and a variety of youth prevention/intervention initiatives. Again, based on county plans, the availability of funding for these activities seems particularly critical in rural, sparsely populated areas of the state, particularly the northern part of the state.

### *d. Faith Based and Community Initiatives*

The DCFS has always sought the participation of the faith community in child welfare program services. Several county planning committees include members of the faith community and some faith-based programs receive funding at the local level. In addition, the DCFS has a collaborative faith-based committee that assists us in a number of areas. For example, DCFS has worked with faith-based groups to promote Wisconsin's Week of the Family.

Use of PSSF funds for this purpose again seems to be utilized more frequently in the sparsely populated rural counties where there are limited service providers and limited facilities. Some of the higher density, urban areas are also utilizing the faith community for mentoring and other youth services. Some are also collaborating with the faith community to provide parenting and other family strengthening programs.

*e. Rural Initiative*

Wisconsin's PSSF program has been designed to allow communities to develop plans and implement programs that meet the unique needs of their individual communities.

Consequently, rural programs are able to address special concerns such as transportation, isolation, limited service providers, etc. Funding is provided directly to the counties, allowing rural areas the ability to determine how to best serve their population and who will provide the services.

In Wisconsin, there are many sparsely populated rural counties that are two to four hours from any urban center. Funding allocations for PSSF and other programs recognize the challenges of providing services in rural areas, so small counties are given minimum base allocations to ensure they can provide a minimum level of service.

*f. Coordinated Service Teams*

The Coordinated Service Team (CST) Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Division of Disability and Elder Services (DDES) in the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS). The CST approach promotes a deeper and more active role for families in identifying their strengths, needs and the case plan that help them achieve either reunification with or permanence for their children. CST's are especially key in ensuring that families with mental health and substance abuse issues receive appropriate and effective services that are family-friendly and with which they can succeed.

PSSF funds are used to provide time-limited financial support, training, and technical assistance to counties to maximize the use of existing resources that support collaborative efforts resulting in a clear vision, meaningful structural change, and measurable outcomes for children and families across systems.

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan (CAPTA)**

### Introduction

The CAPTA program is operated by DCFS to provide training and technical assistance to counties operating child protective services (CPS) programs and to support efforts to prevent maltreatment of children and the recurrence of maltreatment.

A significant change in Wisconsin's child protective services system in recent years has been the gradual move from 72 local CPS programs, each operating according to its own interpretation of state standards and policies and local community expectations, to a statewide program where all 72 local agencies use the same model of practice, the Wisconsin Model. The development of the statewide automated system (eWiSACWIS) accelerated a move toward consistency of practice that had been slowly occurring through development of standards, training, the development of risk assessment and safety assessment tools, and technical assistance to counties who chose to implement the forerunner of the Wisconsin Model (WisRMS).

The DCFS position funded by CAPTA, a CPS specialist, has been very involved in many aspects of bringing about this consistency. These include policy and standard development, refinement of tools, development of the ongoing services portion of the Wisconsin Model (family assessment, case plan, and case progress evaluation), curriculum development and training, technical assistance to counties, and technical assistance to the eWiSACWIS Project for automating the Wisconsin Model.

Although all counties are now using the same model-- and many of the efforts over the past five years have concentrated on developing policies and standards, developing the model, and increasing knowledge and skills of CPS staff to move toward this level of consistency-- there is still a need to bring greater clarity and specificity to policies, to review and revise the model to reflect new knowledge, and to increase the skills of caseworkers and supervisors to assure greater quality and consistency in decision making.

### Connection to CFSR Process

As a result of the Child and Family Services Review conducted in August of 2003, a number of issues relating to child safety were identified as needing improvement. These issues are incorporated into the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), in particular Action Step A on access to CPS services and multiple referrals, Action Step B on safety assessment and planning, and Action Step H on safety assessment for placements of children with relatives. A number of these program enhancement activities are being funded, at least in part, under the CAPTA grant.

The first two years of the CAPTA five-year plan for 2005-2009 consist entirely of activities in the PEP related to one or more of the 14 areas delineated in CAPTA. In addition, DCFS has concentrated on ensuring compliance with new CAPTA requirements established by the 2003 CAPTA reauthorization.

## CAPTA Progress Report

### A. Scope of CPS Intervention

#### CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

#### Wisconsin goal: Define the scope of cases requiring CPS intervention.

As discussed in the 5-year plan, this initiative encompasses more than drafting a statement of the purpose and scope of CPS and who the system seeks to serve. Although a clear understanding of who the CPS system seeks to serve is a necessary foundation for all subsequent CPS decisions and practice standards, the tasks under this goal also include guidelines for screening and for determining how quickly a response is needed on screened-in reports. There is a need not only for greater consistency statewide in these decisions, but for supporting improved decision making at intake/access. Other tasks encompassed in this goal include: 1) how to record multiple reports of the same incident or episode of maltreatment and multiple findings within the same episode, and 2) when to formally name and designate a particular person as a maltreater, and 3) agency response in cases that do not meet the definition of maltreatment or threatened maltreatment.

As part of the PEP implementation process, a Child Welfare Case Process Committee, comprised of county, state, and tribal staff and other child welfare stakeholders, was created to work closely with BPP in developing and implementing CPS policies and procedures. The committee is divided into two workgroups with one focusing on Access and Initial Assessment and the other focusing on Ongoing Services. The Access/Initial Assessment workgroup, has been meeting since July of 2004. The workgroup, which began meeting before the committees to carry out the PEP were formed, is now one of the standing workgroups for the PEP and meets monthly.

The first draft of the Access (intake) Standard has been completed and disseminated for statewide review. It was also discussed at the state public child welfare conference held April 11-13, 2005. The draft addresses all of the following issues discussed in the five-year plan and Wisconsin's PEP:

- scope of CPS/who CPS seeks to serve
- screening criteria
- urgency criteria (how quickly to respond) based primarily on threats to safety
- handling of multiple reports
- agency response to non-CPS issues, but more will have to be done when the Initial Assessment Standards are revised

Progress has been made in integrating the Access Standard policies and decision-making criteria into the core training curriculum, although the curriculum cannot be finished until the Access Standard is finalized.

Over the course of the next year, the DCFS will complete and issue the Access Standard, provide an overview of the new Access Standard statewide, either through regional roundtables or through one statewide overview/training, accompanied by video conference as needed, and complete the redesign of the eWiSACWIS system necessary to meet the policies in the Access Standard.

## B. State Standards

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)].
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Increase our ability to help children remain safely at home by updating the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *Ongoing Services Standards and Guidelines for Child Protective Services* regarding safety assessment, safety planning, and assessment of parental protective capacities.

As discussed in the five-year plan, activities in this area will not begin until the Access Standard is completed. The activities under this goal are a PEP item and all planned for the upcoming year. There have been no changes in the planned activities as described in the five-year plan, with the exception of how the workgroups will be structured. The plan is repeated below.

Safety assessment and planning is a skilled activity essential to CPS practice throughout the life of a case, yet it continues to be difficult for many caseworkers and supervisors. It is particularly difficult for staff to develop safety plans that are sufficient in controlling the threats to safety and to develop measurable treatment plans that are effective in establishing and maintaining a safe environment.

In studying the issue, the PEP Core Team came to believe that part of the problem was difficulty on the part of CPS staff to recognize and address various issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health problems. Although the safety assessment instrument and safety planning format in Standards and WiSACWIS clearly incorporate the above concerns, as well as others that threaten a child's safety, caseworkers may not consistently identify them in all cases and to effectively manage them with in-home plans.

BPP staff and PEP Core Team participants identified the need to incorporate the concept of parental protective capacities – those behaviors and perceptions that act as a buffer and barrier to safety threats – in caseworker training and in policies and decision making instruments. Current policies reference protective capacities, some instruments, such as the family assessment, incorporate some protective capacities, and the Wisconsin Training Partnerships offer training which emphasizes protective capacities. However, there is a need to clearly incorporate the identification of parental protective capacities – those that exist and those that need to be enhanced – in all relevant decision making instruments throughout the case process and to assure that caseworkers and supervisors have the understanding and skills necessary to apply the concepts in achieving safe environments for children. This will provide a clearer path for establishing sufficient in-home safety plans and for defining when a family is “done” and no further CPS services are needed.

Modifications will need to be made to the current safety assessment and safety planning instruments to reflect the current available wisdom on safety assessment. We began formally assessing safety as a distinct decision, separate from risk, in 1987. We revised the instruments over the years as new knowledge became available. We will continue to review recent advances in the field regarding safety decision-making and determine whether and how current instruments should be revised. To accomplish this:

- BPP will establish two workgroups of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal staff, with representatives from domestic violence programs, one for the *CPS Investigation Standards* and one for the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*. The current workgroup for the Access Standard, with the addition of tribal representatives and some private sector professionals and advocates, has agreed to continue working on revisions to the *CPS Investigation Standards*. Using technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, DCFS will update both sets of standards to reflect the best current knowledge in safety and assure that staff recognize and understand the conditions and behaviors that make a child unsafe.
- Tools in eWiSACWIS will be revised, as necessary. BPP will develop and issue clear, comprehensive instructions for documenting safety assessments and safety plans in eWiSACWIS.
- Safety training curricula will be revised and expanded to reflect the revised standards and to support the acquisition of the skills necessary to develop, implement, and monitor effective safety plans. This may include the development of new courses in safety assessment and planning.

This initiative will begin when the Access Standard is completed. All of the activities will be completed within the next two years.

### C. Guardian ad Litem Training

Wisconsin goal: Support an ongoing multi-disciplinary effort to provide training for guardians ad litem.

The 2004 Guardian ad Litem conference, *Through the Eyes of a Child: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Child Advocacy*, was held November 11 and 12, 2004. There were 246 attendees, a 25% increase over the previous year. The majority of attendees were guardians ad litem, and the second largest group was social workers from the public child welfare system. Court commissioners also attended, as did some public defenders and prosecutors.

General session presentations included Victor Vieth, director of the National Child Protection Center, speaking on a Plan to End Child Abuse, and Greg Lester, presenting an all-day workshop on Addictive Disorders – Hidden Trigger for Family Violence and Child Abuse. Other workshops addressed the following topics:

- social and emotional development of maltreated children
- CFSR and the Program Enhancement Plan
- child neglect
- preparing children for court
- relating conditions for return to safety threats
- addressing domestic abuse in child custody and placement cases
- ethics for guardians ad litem – conflicts and confidentiality
- avoiding guardian ad litem burnout

The DCFS will again cosponsor the Guardian ad Litem conference in November of 2005. BPP staff are involved in the multi-disciplinary planning committee to assure that information critical to representing children who have been maltreated, who are unsafe in their homes, or who are in the out-of-home care system is presented.

General session topics for the 2005 two-day conference include cultural competence, reactive attachment disorder, children with sexual behavior problems, and internet crimes against children. Planned workshop topics include:

- children of prisoners
- problem solving tough cases
- parental alienation
- sexual assault perpetrators
- children's records law
- working with hearing-impaired children and adults
- children with disabilities

#### D. Family Participation

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Improve family participation in case planning.

As discussed in the CAPTA five-year Report, efforts have been made over the previous five years to increase family participation in case planning. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* require it, and the Wisconsin Training Partnerships have been providing training that reflects and supports the standard. However, this standard has not consistently been applied statewide. Barriers to the consistent application of the standard include lack of clarity and detail regarding the policy, lack of skills necessary to engage the family and develop a less authoritarian relationship, and high caseloads.

DCFS expects to provide a clearer road map through the efforts of the Access Standard workgroup by clarifying and revising safety assessment and planning. As a part of the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) process, the Child Welfare Case Process Committee will hold caseworker focus groups to determine barriers to engaging families and then develop actions/tasks to enhance practice to address concerns about the lack of clarity in policy requiring family involvement in case planning. Information collected will inform the revision of the Ongoing Services Standards and Guidelines for Child Protective Services in the second year of the PEP.

Additionally, over the next two years, the Wisconsin Training Partnerships will develop or adapt current curricula to increase caseworker skills in engaging families.

#### E. Safety of Children with Relatives

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Effectively assess the safety of a child placed in a relative's home.

Although the Wisconsin Model (and eWiSACWIS) have, as part of the Out-Of-Home Safety Plan instrument, a process for assessing the safety of a specific child when placed in a specific licensed facility, there is currently no process for assessing safety specific to an unlicensed relative's home. CPS staff have been reluctant to place children with relatives in the absence of a clear process for assessing the safety of that placement.

DCFS will continue to review current models for assessing the safety of kinship placements, as well as relevant literature, and seek technical assistance from the NRCCPS to develop criteria, policy, and procedures for assessing safety in kinship placements.

DCFS will:

- Develop policy and issue guidance for documenting the assessment within the current eWiSACWIS system
- work with the Wisconsin Training Partnerships to include this safety assessment procedure in the relevant training curricula

The above activities will be completed in the second year of the PEP. In the subsequent three years of this five-year-Plan, we will review whether eWiSACWIS should be modified to include a specific instrument for assessing safety in kinship homes, rather than requiring the use of existing documentation formats.

#### F. Program Coordination

CAPTA areas:

- Creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency protocols to enhance investigations; and improving legal preparation and representation, including—(i) procedures for appealing and responding to appeals of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect; and (ii) provisions for the appointment of an individual appointed to represent a child in judicial proceedings. [section 106(a)(2)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

#### Child Protective Services/Law Enforcement Coordination

Wisconsin goal: Improve the coordination between CPS and law enforcement agencies to increase safety for children and other family members while assuring clarity in the differences between the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Many county agencies in Wisconsin have long-standing cooperative working relationships with their local law enforcement agencies. These relationships vary from those where roles are clearly differentiated to those where roles and activities are somewhat merged. The issuance of the *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies*, developed with input from law enforcement officials, began a discussion between the two systems regarding roles and procedures. The new CAPTA requirements for advising the alleged maltreater of the allegations at the first contact and for training to assure that CPS

staff understand and observe the rights of families have helped to underscore the need for further discussion and policy development to continue to promote coordination while clearly differentiating roles and responsibilities. Currently, the Wisconsin Training Partnerships are developing this training for CPS staff and it will be delivered over the course of the next two years.

Other initiatives are likely to impact procedures and protocols between CPS and law enforcement: expanding Memoranda of Understanding between law enforcement and CPS to include domestic violence agencies, determining who CPS serves, evaluating the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision, and requiring greater emphasis on engaging families. We will continue to involve law enforcement professionals as well as other child welfare stakeholders over the next five years to identify the impact on their agencies as a result of changes in CPS practice and policy.

#### DV/CPS Collaboration Project

Wisconsin goal: Improve the CPS response in cases where domestic violence is present.

The DCFS plans to continue its efforts in supporting and enhancing the collaborative relationship between domestic violence and CPS agencies. Specialized curriculum on domestic violence for CPS caseworkers will be updated to reflect changes in law, best practice, and policy. This will include an expanded training component on collaboration with domestic violence service providers.

Information on domestic violence issues will be included as part of pre-service and/or foundation training.

The DCFS will also:

- Include information on the identification of and response to domestic violence in the development of the CPS Access Standard and update of the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *Ongoing Services Standards and Guidelines for Child Protective Services*. This is linked with the PEP-related activities.
- Identify other child welfare policy areas with domestic violence-related safety concerns and work with DV advocates to address the changes needed.
- Continue the annual joint regional meetings of DV and CPS agencies.
- Continue regular training and updates on the CPS system and policies for DV program staff.
- Include domestic violence agencies in Memoranda of Understanding between CPS and law enforcement.

#### G. Coordinated Services

CAPTA area:

- Supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system, and private community-based programs to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems) and to address the health needs, including mental health needs, of children identified

as abused or neglected, including supporting prompt, comprehensive health and developmental evaluations for children who are the subject of substantiated child maltreatment reports. [section 106(a)(14)].

Wisconsin goal: Expand the coordinated services team initiative.

The Coordinated Services Team (CST) initiative continues. Although the initiative is not funded by CAPTA, the staff position funded by CAPTA will continue to provide technical assistance to the initiative to assure consistency with the Standards for all cases that are part of the CPS system.

The effort to evaluate and compare the case planning format for CPS cases with the format for CST cases will continue as part of the PEP activities described above in reviewing and revising Standards.

#### H. Substantiation Decision

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)].

Wisconsin goal: Assess the impact of the substantiation decision on the effectiveness of safety assessment and safety plans and the effectiveness of efforts to engage the family in meaningful treatment planning.

“Substantiation” is the finding made by child protective services (CPS) staff that a child has been maltreated or that a specific person has maltreated a child and is based on the lowest evidentiary standard (i.e., a preponderance of the evidence). There are problems associated with substantiation. It is used for purposes for which it was not originally intended (e.g. criminal prosecutions, gate-keeping for CHIPS proceedings, licensing and employment decisions, and gate-keeping for case opening and eligibility for services). This problem is heightened by the lack of uniformity in application from one county to another in terms of what is considered abuse and neglect, and which cases are screened in and screened out.

Substantiation creates problems unique to Wisconsin CPS. The statutory definitions of physical abuse and sexual abuse include abuse to a child by any other person, including another child. This has led to young children being substantiated as child abusers rather than identified as children in need of protection or services. It has also led to CPS staff substantiating individuals as maltreaters in cases of stranger homicide, assault, date rape, and other assaults on children by persons in a non-caregiving role, in the midst of a law enforcement investigation.

Over the next several years, the DCFS is proposing to establish a two-phase approach to resolving issues and determining policy. First, a workgroup comprised of state, county, and tribal staff will discuss the problems/issues and develop preliminary recommendations, ranging from clearer policy and additional training to the elimination of substantiation as a case finding. This will involve the use of research, both national and Wisconsin-specific, related to issues around substantiation, including reliability and validity and effectiveness in protecting children. The second phase will add selected groups to the discussion, including law enforcement, district attorneys and corporation counsels, licensing staff, legislators, and the child welfare training partnerships. The DCFS will involve staff from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services, with whom we have already been consulting.

The workgroup recommendations, if implemented, will require training for a variety of county staff, including CPS, court/legal, and law enforcement. In addition, the DCFS may need to counteract the misperception that making changes to substantiating maltreaters represents a “softer” approach to child abuse. At the same time, this may be an opportunity for us to clarify that, while both CPS and law enforcement are often both involved in child abuse/neglect cases, they have unique roles and functions.

#### K. Citizen Review Panels

In response to the federal CAPTA requirements for states to establish Citizen Review Panels (CRP), Wisconsin established two county panels and one panel with individuals representing each of the counties in a judicial district. The third panel proved difficult to manage due to its size and was reformed as a county panel. The current CRPs are in La Crosse County, Marathon County, and Outagamie County. The CY 2004 Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports are attached the plan.

Extensive training and education was provided to the Panel members, both in terms of the role of Citizen Review Panels and child welfare legislation, policy and practice. The CRPs are multi-functional and, in addition to their role as a Citizen Review Panel, they provide essential input to the local county child welfare agency. Among the areas they also address are: helping to improve coordination and collaboration among various public and private entities that provide programs and services to the children and families of their county; and identifying community needs and working to educate the community. DCFS staff meet with the panels to ensure appropriate implementation of the new CAPTA requirements and also to complete plans for their participation in Wisconsin’s PEP implementation.

#### Description of CAPTA Services and Training to be Provided [sec. 106(b)(2)(C)]

The majority of the training to be provided with CAPTA funds has been described above. In addition, CAPTA funds will continue to be used over the next five years to cosponsor the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, which provides training and networking opportunities for CPS staff, services providers, advocates, mandated reporters, and others

involved in the broader child protection system. Additionally, CAPTA funds will continue to be used for the annual Guardian ad Litem Conference.

Funding is provided to each of Wisconsin's four regional Wisconsin Training Partnerships for curriculum development and training for CPS staff and supervisors not eligible for funding under Title IV-E. The next planned revisions of the Core training of the Partnerships will be for the activities and skills necessary for access and initial assessment. These curricula will be modified as soon as the policies and standards revisions are completed by the workgroups discussed above in the State Plan. As other training needs are identified as a result of policy development, CAPTA funds will be used to support that training, at least in part.

An area where DCFS continues to focus our training efforts is safety decision making. The DCFS has been working with the Training Partnerships and ACTION for Child Protection to develop, revise, and provide additional safety training in the state. Training continues to be offered across the state on an ongoing basis. Following is a description of the training:

*Managing Sufficient Safety in CPS* is a two-day learning experience for caseworkers and supervisors emphasizing providing sufficient safety intervention. The two-day workshop is followed by a complementary supervisory learning opportunity concerned with consultation. Training begins with a review of basic safety assessment and safety planning competencies leading to consideration of sufficiency of safety plans. The curriculum promotes safety intervention as a continuum of assessment and planning not specific to a particular function. The curriculum addresses essential knowledge and skill required by all CPS staff regardless of initial assessment or ongoing assignment. The curriculum will emphasize critical safety assessment competency, developing sufficient safety plans, and managing sufficient safety plans. The curriculum includes attention to safety management of safety plans within ongoing CPS.

The supervisory workshop emphasizes the consultative role supportive of building safety intervention competency in CPS staff. The following is an overview of the training:

For the most part, CAPTA funds are used to support training, policy development, technical assistance, and program development rather than direct services to individuals, families, or communities. CAPTA funds support a full-time position in the DCFS, that coordinates policy and program development and training initiatives, responds directly to the public on concerns about how CPS cases have been handled, , and educates the community on how the CPS program and child welfare system in Wisconsin generally operate. This position also provides technical assistance to communities and providers that are developing policies and practices about interaction with the CPS system as they seek to provide better services to their clients.

## **Special Needs Adoption Program**

### Program Description

The Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) provides permanency consultation to child welfare agencies, recruits adoptive families, and finalizes adoption for children who need a permanent home. Children in out-of-home care who are made available for adoption by counties through a termination of parental rights (TPR) are referred to the SNAP.

Children are matched with adoptive parents or, in better than 85% of cases, are adopted by their foster parents. DCFS oversees the program statewide, with the Milwaukee adoption program managed by BMCW and the balance-of-state program managed by BPP.

Under Wisconsin law, DCFS assumes guardianship for children upon termination of parental rights (TPR). Following TPR making the child available for adoption, custody and responsibility for the foster care payment is transferred from the county child welfare agency to the SNAP. In Milwaukee County, cases are transferred to the adoption program within BMCW. The SNAP and Milwaukee Adoption program finalize the adoptions and process requests for Adoption Assistance.

### Progress Report

The SNAP uses innovative approaches to providing professional quality services that have resulted in permanency for thousands of children in Wisconsin. In addition, surveys reflect that adoptive families have a high level of satisfaction with the services provided through the program. Planning and consultation by state adoption staff with counties has assisted in moving more children to reunification or permanence through adoption. At the same time, applicants for an adoptive placement are discovering that the time to complete an adoptive home study has decreased from previous years. All of these approaches will continue to have an impact to improve adoption program outcomes.

The goal of permanency is a common thread that unites agencies to achieve the established standards of practice of the Adoption Program. The SNAP has evolved into a program that ensures quality services to families and timely permanence to children by adhering to performance standards that focus on best practice and comply with state and federal guidelines.

The DCFS has been able to maintain a pool of available foster and adoptive resources, with recruitment emphasizing word-of-mouth information sharing by adoptive parents. Wisconsin also enjoys an 85% foster home conversion rate. Accordingly, DCFS works with counties to recruit more quality foster homes that can become adoptive homes.

The Adoption Program develops an annual report to the Legislature regarding the previous year's services and costs. A copy of the 2004 report is attached. The private agencies have demonstrated their ability to develop the capacity to handle all the assigned cases and continue to move the children to permanence in a timely and efficient manner.

### Number of Adoptions

Increasing the numbers of minority and special needs adoptions and increasing the timeliness of adoption finalizations has been a priority for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Over the past 5 years, Wisconsin has doubled the number of finalized special needs adoptions. Calendar Year 2004 was the third consecutive year that adoptions in Wisconsin exceeded 1,000 children. Of the 1,024 adoptions in 2004, 440 of the children were over the age of nine.

The following chart reflects the numbers of adoptions for special needs children in which DCFS had guardianship over the last ten years. During that period, 7673 children were adopted into permanent families, with 3221 of that group, or 42%, finalized in the last three calendar years.

Special Needs Adoption Finalizations in Wisconsin 1995-2004			
Year	Regions	BMCW	Total
1995	313	151	464
1996	311	254	565
1997	321	290	611
1998	415	307	722
1999	350	304	654
2000	421	288	709
2001	464	263	727
2002	544	500	1044
2003	562	591	1153
2004	461	563	1024
<b>Total</b>	<b>4162</b>	<b>3511</b>	<b>7673</b>

### Adoption Assistance

DCFS and private partner adoption staff strive to find appropriate adoptive families to best meet the needs of children when it is not safe for them to stay with their birth parents. A majority of the children adopted through the SNAP are eligible for adoption assistance. Adoption assistance reimburses the family for some of the costs of extensive and frequently expensive care. As of February 2005, there were 7,564 children receiving Adoption Assistance through the State of Wisconsin. The Adoption Assistance Program is funded with Title IV-E and state matching funds.

Adoption assistance may include:

- Medical assistance for some medical costs not covered by the family's health insurance;
- Monthly reimbursement to adoptive parent(s) to assist in meeting the financial demands of caring for a child with special needs; and
- Reimbursement of certain non-recurring adoption expenses (e.g., legal fees and/or agency fees) up to \$2,000 per child.

Chapter HFS 50, Adm. Code, *Facilitating the Adoption of a Child with Special Needs*, became effective in 2002. According to its requirements, a child must have, or be at high risk of developing, special care needs in order to be eligible for adoption assistance, and otherwise would not be able to be placed for adoption without assistance. Examples of a child with special care needs include:

- an older child – 10 to 18 years of age;
- a child experiencing emotional or behavioral problems to a degree that meets established criteria;
- a sibling group of three or more that must be placed together;
- a child of a minority race who cannot be readily placed due to a lack of placement resources, in accordance with the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA);
- a child with a disability or in need of personal care assistance (e.g., dressing, bathing, or feeding) or with special medical or physical problems that require special diets, medication, or physical therapy; and
- a child at risk of developing special care needs due to poor prenatal care, or a child whose birth family medical history indicates a risk for future health problems, or a child whose social history identifies certain risk factors.

### Redesign of State Adoption Program

In July 2000, DHFS entered into contracts with private child placing agencies across the state to increase program capacity to move children to permanence in a quality and timely manner. Federal mandates regarding permanence for children require that states look at ways to increase their capacities to serve children needing adoptive families while maintaining acceptable adoption caseworker workloads.

The Adoption and Consultation Section in BPP formally completed its transition from five to three regions with main offices in Eau Claire, Green Bay and Madison on July 1, 2004.

In October 2004 the Request for Proposal (RFP) was reissued for the regional adoption contracts. The decision was made by DCFS to reduce the number of contracts from 5 to 3 to replicate the current regional structure in the SNAP. On December 21, 2004 letters of intent to contract were issued with new contracts in place effective January 1, 2005. . The agencies that previously held contracts, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin and Lutheran Social Services, were awarded new contracts. That the lead and subcontract agencies remain essentially unchanged allows for continuity in adoption services along with continued growth in the quality of services as the private partner workers become better trained in SNAP policies and procedures.

The State Permanency Consultants (SPC) build close relationships with staff in the counties where they are assigned. The focus of their work is on consultation with Child Protective Services supervisors and social workers, foster families, birth family members and children who will be affected by a termination of parental rights. Currently consultants are working on referrals for more than 550 children who have a primary or a concurrent plan of adoption. The BMCW uses contract employees to provide a similar permanency consultant function in Milwaukee County.

One of the outcomes of the state staff's new permanency consultation role has been the earlier identification and placement of children in pre-adoptive homes when adoption is the goal or the concurrent plan.

A benefit of the close working relationship between counties and SPC's is the sharing of prospective adoptive resource families for placement of children, as well as adoptive home studies of existing foster families. This approach will assist Wisconsin to meet the improvement targets in the PEP toward the national performance standard federal that 32% of children achieve a finalized adoption within 24 months of the date of removal.

### Adoption QA

The Quality Assurance Program within the Adoption and Consultation Unit, set up three years ago, has developed a strong leadership and consultation role, with staff, within the regions of the state to provide practice and policy advice and training to contract agencies, State Permanency Consultants, regional supervisors and central program management. The QA Specialists monitor the quality of the adoption services for contract agencies through case reviews, satisfaction surveys, and complaint analysis and resolution. In addition, the program specialists undertake individual projects for program improvement, such as eWiSACWIS monitoring, recruitment and retention of adoptive families, and international adoption monitoring. The specialists provide statistical analysis as needed and create program improvement initiatives. The QA role within the agency has become a crucial component of the provision of adoption services of high quality throughout the regions served by the Adoption Program.

The most visible initiative of the QA Program has been the monthly e-mail newsletter addressed to all state and partnership staff. The function of the newsletter is to provide a means of communication to staff who are geographically dispersed throughout the state. The newsletter provides a method of dispensing policy and practice information, as well as initiating program improvement, such as ensuring eWiSACWIS completion for AFCARS compliance. The newsletter has become a very important tool of the QA Program to ensure consistency and communication on a statewide level.

QA specialists have taken a very strong training role for various areas of practice in the regions. In addition, the specialists monitor satisfaction for the program as a whole and create reports on the functioning of the Adoption program.

### Adoption Incentive Payments

The DCFS has initiated and continues to implement efforts to support the delivery of timely, high-quality special needs adoption services. Adoption incentive funds received by the DCFS have been directed toward the continued support of the Special Needs Adoption Initiative and other child welfare program services. Such resources are used to enhance the program's capacity to complete adoptive home studies, finalize adoptive placements, and achieve adoptions in a more timely manner. Adoption incentive funds enhance the State's capacity to recruit and study potential adoptive families and finalize adoptive placements by public and private staff within the Adoption Program.

Adoption incentive funds received by the DCFS were used to support Adoption Program services in the following areas:

- Increased adoptive home studies for families by contract partner agencies;
- Support the Post-Adoption Resource Centers to provide post-adoption services;
- Support recruitment efforts to find adoptive resources for children;
- Special Child Welfare initiatives to support the activities outlined in the PEP; and,
- Fund project staff to perform additional special needs adoption services.

DCFS has earned adoption incentive funds for five years, with FFY 2003 being the most recent year that funds were earned. The adoption incentive funds were used to support the state Adoption Program private partner contracts for the first three years. State funds and federal PSSF funds are currently used to maintain the contracts. In year four, \$1million was included in the BMCW program budget for network services to support permanency for children. The remaining \$158,000 was used to support the state adoption contracts. In year five, all of the incentive funds were included in the BMCW network services budget.

Medicaid - Per the requirement in Section 473A of the Social Security Act for adoption incentive funds, Wisconsin provides health insurance coverage through the Title XIX Medical Assistance Program to all children with special needs for whom there is an Adoption Assistance Agreement in place. The Medical Assistance Program offers broad access to a comprehensive range of medical services. Medical Assistance categorically needy coverage is authorized for every child who is qualified for Adoption Assistance whether they are Title IV-E eligible or not. Children who receive no Adoption Assistance funds but who are considered "at risk" are also certified for Medical Assistance coverage.

### International Adoptions

As a result of the Hague Convention, states are required to track dissolutions of adoptions of international children. Dissolutions of adoptions occur after the adoption has been finalized as compared with disruptions of pre-adoptive placements prior to finalization. For purposes of tracking dissolutions, DCFS looks for information on dissolutions of international adoptions where the child enters out-of-home care or parental rights of the adoptive parents are terminated.

In 2004, DCFS recorded 15 internationally adopted children who entered out-of-home care. No cases resulted in TPR. The original adoptive families are caring for the child with the help of services provided through the county child welfare agency

DCFS does not have a way to identify dissolutions of international adoptions that do not come to the attention of county child welfare agencies. DCFS receives anecdotal information about families that arrange independent adoptions for these children, but unless the family comes forward to ask for services or financial support, DCFS has no way of knowing the number of such cases.

DCFS currently does not have the specific details on the 15 cases in 2004 in terms of the country of origin for the children or the agencies that arranged the adoptions. Future reports will provide this level of detail. The adoption QA staff have developed a data collection form and are collecting more detailed information in 2005. The form will be completed by the SPC during regular contact with county staff as an integral part of permanency consultation. The information will be used to identify agency training needs, licensing issues, and updated training to families that intend to adopt internationally.

#### MEPA and Recruitment

To ensure compliance with federal requirements, the SNAP use a form in the placement process statewide to evaluate placements for Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) purposes. This tool was developed by the QA staff and helps ensure that a variety of resources, particularly relatives, are considered in making placement decisions and that the most appropriate resource for the child is chosen based on identified criteria. The SNAP will track information on MEPA and ICWA, as well as on international adoptions as required in the international adoption act (IAA).

There were no MEPA violations in Wisconsin during 2004.

The CFSR created an excellent opportunity for Wisconsin to look at the services the Adoption Program currently offers with an eye on those services that families have identified that they need. The DCFS is taking advantage of this opportunity to expand services to foster and adoptive families as identified in the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP). The challenge for Wisconsin will be to support these services when our adoption incentive funds disappear due to our inability to increase the number of adoptions.

More emphasis is being placed on recruitment of families to meet the needs of the children in care. Special emphasis is placed on targeted recruitment. The DCFS is currently working with AdoptUSKids as a pilot state to address recruitment needs. The DCFS will be doing benchmarking initially in the area of Indian family recruitment and may move into other targeted ethnic areas of need. AdoptUSKids was in Wisconsin six days already in 2004 and the DCFS plans to have them back for several more days during the year. While recruitment was not identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR, the DCFS believes it is an area where Wisconsin can do better.

## **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program**

The Wisconsin Independent Living Program provides statewide services and support for youth in and exiting out-of-home care in accordance with the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This report addresses Sec. 477 (42 U.S.C. 677) (a) of the Social Security Act and progress on the CFSP goals as required for the annual report.

Agencies must submit an annual work plan describing the current and following years' IL programs and services. Annual reports requiring information on the number of youth served, services, progress achieved and challenges addressed are also submitted to the DCFS. This report attempts to summarize all local efforts, providing a generalized accounting of services design and outcomes. State activities are also noted and described where appropriate.

In 2004, Wisconsin implemented a new data collection form, CFS-873A, Independent Living Participant Data, in anticipation of the finalized Federal reporting requirements for State Independent Living Programs. This form was revised to include all of the proposed National Youth Transition Database items identified in the Federal draft format, "List of NYTD Data Items December 2003." Data provided throughout this final report was compiled using the CFS-873A and covers the period, January 1 - December 31, 2004. Wisconsin does not have an electronic database system for capturing and reporting independent living (IL) data. Accuracy of the data in this report is dependent upon each agency's interpretation of the IL eligibility and program criteria and the manual recording and calculation of demographic and services data. It is anticipated that the quality of IL data and reporting will improve when federal reporting requirements are finalized and these requirements are implemented via the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWISACWIS).

### **Program Eligibility**

Wisconsin's IL Program provides services and supports to youth aged 15-21 years. Eligibility for Wisconsin Chafee services includes those youth that have been in out-of-home care (OHC) placement in Wisconsin for at least 6 months after the age of 15 or older with eligibility continuing to the age of 21 years. Youth that are in OHC placement for six months and adopted after the age of 15 years are also eligible for services. Youth exiting care prior to age 18 due to adoption, guardianship (s. 48.977, Stats.), long-term Kinship Care or hospitalization, may continue to be eligible for IL services, although eligibility for certain benefits (e.g., room and board, Medicaid) may be limited by the Chafee Act.

### **Distribution of Funds**

Chafee funds are allocated via state/county and state/tribal contracts. Recipients of CFCIP and ETV-funded allocations were expanded in 2004 to include 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Division of Juvenile Corrections.

The Chafee funding will continue to be utilized to develop, expand, and strengthen local independent living services for youth. The State allocates funding to these local agencies based on the average number of youth eligible for and receiving independent living services in each community. This formula was developed and utilized to ensure that each agency receives an amount of the available funding that is commensurate with the number of local youth eligible for and receiving assistance to achieve independence.

For FFY 2004, Wisconsin has received reductions in federal funding for both the Independent Living and Education and Training Vouchers Programs. CFCIP funding was reduced by 23% and the ETV Program funding was reduced by 18% versus the prior year. These cuts occurred despite the fact that the number of older youth eligible for and receiving IL services has increased during the funding periods. While Wisconsin will strive to ensure that youth receive efficient and effective IL services and supports, significant program changes may become necessary over the next few years to reflect the decreased federal resources and an increased service population.

### National Evaluations

The State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Children and Family Services, continues to cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of the CFCIP. In addition, Wisconsin, along with Iowa and Illinois, is participating in an ongoing multi-state evaluation of older youth exiting foster care. Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, is conducting this research project and Wave 2 of a three-wave study was completed in 2004. Evaluation results will be utilized to shape future independent living services for youth in and exiting care. Results may also be utilized for future federal reporting.

## **Education and Training Vouchers Program**

In 2003, upon receiving federal approval of Wisconsin's Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program plan, the state distributed additional funding and information regarding program requirements to all county and tribal departments of human or social services for implementation by January 1, 2004. A numbered memo, DCFS Memo Series 2003-10, mandating the implementation of the ETV Program and outlining program requirements, was disseminated statewide to all counties and tribes providing independent living services under Wisconsin's Independent Living Program. The memo describes the ETV Program requirements and desired outcomes that must be met while allowing individual agencies the flexibility to implement the services locally in the most effective manner possible for all youth. State-facilitated meetings were held in each region of the State to further explain and discuss program implementation, requirements, and practice issues regarding the ETV program.

In 2004, ETV program funds were utilized to expand the educational component of independent living services at the state and local levels. The existing DCFS Scholarship Program for youth aging out of out-of-home care increased the amount of the individual

scholarships available to youth for post-secondary education and training and extended the period for which youth will be eligible for the scholarship funds. Additional funding was provided to local agencies to expand services and increase financial support to assist youth with participation in post-secondary institutions. The state and local agencies collaborated as follows:

- The DCFS Scholarship Program will provide funding for any direct costs; i.e., tuition and fees associated with attending an institution of higher learning.
- Combined scholarships and local ETV assistance will not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- Local agencies will utilize ETV funds for the purchase of technical equipment or assistance to include, but not be limited to, computers, calculators, and supplies associated with post-secondary coursework.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program and local agencies may provide additional assistance or support necessary for successful completion of higher education, including, but not limited to: tutoring, transportation, books, child care, housing, program entry testing, costs, incentives, leadership/workshop/vocational activities, etc.

*ETV program eligibility requirements are:*

- Education and training vouchers (ETV) will be available to all youth meeting current State independent living eligibility criteria (i.e., youth aged 15 to 21 years placed in out-of-home care at the age of 15 or older for a period of not less than six months) for costs associated with post-secondary attendance and participation.
- Eligibility will also be extended to youth up to 23 years of age who were participating in the voucher program on the date they attained age 21, as long as they are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.
- Youth adopted from foster care after attaining 6 months in out-of-home care followed by adoption at the age of 15 years or older shall be considered eligible for ETV program assistance.

*ETV Program Criteria:*

- Vouchers shall be available for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Voucher amounts shall not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of that Act.
- The amount of a voucher under this section shall be disregarded for purposes of determining the recipient's eligibility for, or the amount of, any other Federal or federally-supported assistance, except that the total amount of all assistance should not exceed the total cost of attendance. The DCFS Scholarship Program shall take

appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal or federally supported programs.

- The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs. State and local agencies will partner with secondary and post-secondary institutions and each other to increase awareness of the educational challenges faced by youth aging out of out-of-home care and the ETV Program. Wisconsin initiated this collaboration in 2001 under the CFCIP, resulting in the development of the statewide Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group. Modifications to the existing DCFS Scholarship Program were made according to input received by all of these partners to better meet needs of youth while fulfilling the new requirements of the ETV program.

#### *ETV Program Development:*

- Assessments of youth skill, needs, and interest areas will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Youth, child welfare agencies, foster parents, and biological family members will participate in development of case plans to support youth's educational goals. Case plans shall include, but are not limited to, assisting youth to: identify post-secondary education or training as a viable option, identify potential vocations and careers, identify and address other areas of need (e.g., housing, transportation) that impact successful participation in higher education, and develop Independent Living Transition Plans to enhance the success of the youth transitioning to self sufficiency.
- Outreach efforts to continue supporting youth after leaving out-of-home care will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Additional efforts will be implemented to inform, remind, and encourage these youth of the higher education assistance available to them prior to reaching age 21 and potentially up to age 23.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program will be expanded to include scholarship funds up to \$5000 per youth per year and allow youths to receive assistance through the fund on an ongoing basis as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. Youth must complete an application for the scholarship program and provide proof of acceptance to the post-secondary institution.
- Funding for attendance costs at post-secondary institutions will be provided directly to the institution upon receipt of a letter of acceptance/admission from the institution on behalf of the youth.
- Purchase orders may be utilized for other costs associated with participation in the post-secondary program.
- Data will be maintained by the local agencies and the DCFS Scholarship Program, including: the number of youth completing a high school education, the number of youth attending post-secondary institutions, the number and types of degrees or certification achieved by participating youth, and the amount and type of financial assistance provided utilizing ETV funds.

Independent living roundtables regarding the ETV Program were held prior to program implementation in 2003 and continued throughout 2004. These meetings were scheduled

in various regions around the State to encourage higher local participation. Prior to program implementation, the meetings focused on technical assistance to Independent Living Coordinators. Following program implementation, meetings were held to inform the DCFS about successes and challenges during this first year of the program. The 2004 meetings also facilitated sharing and discussion between caseworkers and agencies regarding practice issues in the area of helping youth access and achieve higher education.

The following table provides an overview of Wisconsin's 2004 ETV Program:

Table A. 2004 Education and Training Vouchers Program

Total: Local agency ETV Program funds expended	\$ 223,033
Total: DCFS Scholarship Program awards	\$ 304,079
# Youth receiving ETV support or assistance	176
# youth attending post-secondary institutions	156
# youth completing a degree, license, or certification	29
# youth denied ETV assistance	9
# youth receiving DCFS Scholarship award	104

The most common use of ETV Program funding was the payment of tuition and fees, followed by the purchase of consumables (e.g., books, supplies, lab fees, uniforms, etc.). Agencies also used the funds to purchase transportation, room and board assistance, and equipment such as computers and calculators. Less commonly reported assistance included childcare and tutors.

#### 2004 Progress Report toward the purposes of 1-6 of Section 477(a)

The following sections provide detailed data and descriptions of CFCIP plan goal progress, specific program accomplishments, barriers encountered, and the progress made toward the purposes of 1-6 of Section 477(a). These descriptions also assure that CFCIP plan certifications were upheld.

##### 1. *Help youth transition to self-sufficiency*

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are providing an array of services designed to help youth achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

CFCIP funds are allocated to 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare to provide services and support to youth in and exiting foster care up to age 21 years. Each agency submits an annual work plan describing how the program will operate and an annual budget detailing the areas in which the funds will be utilized. CFCIP funds may be used for staff salaries, training, program

administrative costs, direct services, support, supplies and/or financial assistance for youth.

Support for agencies and staff providing IL services is ongoing and needed. Technical assistance from the State is provided on a weekly basis. Most common requests for assistance include program eligibility, appropriate CFCIP expenditures, the DCFS Scholarship Program, and referrals to specialized areas of help. State coordinated training for IL Coordinators during the report period included Independent Living Basic Training, Helping Youth with Mental Health Needs Transition to Self-Sufficiency, helping foster and adoptive children access and achieve post-secondary education, and Independent Living Roundtables in each region. An additional training, Independent Living: Engaging, Empowering, Emancipating, Working Together, Assessing and Assisting the Adolescent, was sponsored by the University of Wisconsin Southern Child Welfare Training Partnership.

Several youth meetings were held in 2004, including the creation of the Youth Advisory Council. The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) meets monthly, and its intended goal was to educate the DCFS about their experiences in the foster care system and inform the state about needed policy changes. However, as the group has developed, members decided that their main interest is to reach out to children currently in the foster care system. 2004 YAC activities included a luncheon with the Governor, meeting with staff from a foster home licensing agency, and connecting with Kids4Kids (a group of high school students interested in assisting foster care youth). Two YAC members attended the national Independent Living Conference in Washington D.C. Other 2004 meetings with youth included sessions to obtain feedback on IL services and sessions to connect them with representatives from the higher education institutions.

The following table describes Wisconsin's program participants for the current report period and the prior four years:

Table B. CFCIP Program Participants

Calendar Year	Total Eligible Youth (15-21 yrs)	Total Youth Receiving Services (15-21 yrs)	18-21 year-olds Receiving Services	Tribal Youth Receiving Services (15-21 yrs)
2000	2019	1273	Unknown	Unknown
2001	3642	1801	Unknown	Unknown
2002	3982	3383	769	132
2003	4326	3123	678	116
2004	4962	3750	1003	117

The following table contains data available on most of the youth receiving services in 2004:

Table C. CFCIP Participant Demographics

Category	Number of Youth	Percentage
Program participants	3750	100
Female	1871	50
Male	1802	48
White	1831	49
African American	1529	41
American Indian	156	4
Asian	51	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	<1
Latino/Hispanic	246	7
Race undetermined	82	22
Tribal membership	126	3
Juvenile justice	919	25

To help youth transition to self-sufficiency, an Independent Living Skills assessment for each program participant is conducted. Local agencies choose the assessment method and tool. Based on 2004 annual reports, the tools used most frequently are the Daniel Memorial and the Ansell-Casey. Many agencies report using various Independent Living forms as the basis for gathering information and assessing the youth's skill levels. Two of the reported forms are the Independent Living Transition Plan and the Independent Living Checklist, forms that were developed by Wisconsin Independent Living staff. The DCFS incorporated these forms into the Department's form index, making them available on a statewide basis.

Each youth must have a documented Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that is based on the skill assessment and input from the youth. The youth identifies areas that are most important to him or her, and planned goals to achieve skills and self-sufficiency are focused on these areas. IL Coordinators may work one-on-one with the youth or participate in team planning and discussions that include the youth, social workers, foster parent, parents, school staff, etc.

The goals of Wisconsin's Independent Living Program are to help youth achieve higher rates of adequate shelter, educational attainment, employment and employment stability, healthy relationships, and financial independence. In addition, the state will see lower rates of incarceration, public assistance utilization, and physical and sexual victimization. All youth will receive developmental skills training and independent living preparation services appropriate to their age and development. Services are designed to assure their capacity to exercise judgment commensurate with their age, abilities, and strengths and

needs. All youth aged 16 and older exiting out-of-home care will leave care with a minimum of the following:

- Driver's license or preparation for obtaining a driver's license or other access to transportation to school, employment, and other critical activities;
- High school diploma or GED or enrollment in an educational program designed to result in a high school diploma or GED;
- Written employment history;
- Copies of their birth certificate, social security card, and medical records;
- Access to funds adequate to support themselves for a period of three months following exit from care;
- Access to and knowledge of local resources, including but not limited to food pantries, human service agencies, health clinics, and mental health facilities; and
- A safe and stable living environment.

The total number of youth receiving services for CY 2004 is 3,750. The newly implemented Independent Living Participant form requires agencies to report both the services for each youth and the nature in which the service was delivered: Planned, Spontaneous, Both, None. Planned services are those activities that were preconceived or well-thought through and documented in the Independent Living Transition Plan. Spontaneous refers to services or activities that happen without prior planning, including teachable moments between youth and their caregivers or workers. This may also include services or activities that occur as a result of natural consequences or emergency situations. Services may be provided by the agency receiving the CFCIP funding or may be provided by a private agency under contract with the county, tribe or state agency.

In 2004, planned services were reported as the most frequently used method for assisting youth. The following tables identify the services or financial assistance received and the total number of youth that receiving this support during the report period:

Table D. Independent Living Services & Participants

Service Received/Financial Assistance	Planned	Spontaneous	Both	None
Secondary education	717	238	670	1478
Post-secondary education	337	216	270	2133
Career preparation	860	321	701	1303
Employment program or vocational training	616	193	539	1828
Budget & financial management	884	320	671	1290
Housing education and home management	899	348	669	1267
Health education	945	279	840	1087
Risk prevention	728	281	651	1536
Mentoring	488	269	479	1982
Total Services	6474	2465	5490	13,904

Table E. Program Outcomes

Outcomes as of December, 2004	# of Youth
Current full-time employment	183
Current part-time employment	809
Employment related skills	1056
Receiving Social Security	406
Receiving scholarships or other educational financial aid (not ETV)	161
Education and Training Voucher Program	160
Housing assistance	282
Other support	1028
Current enrollment/attendance in secondary or post-secondary education or training program	1187
Connection to adult	2254
Substance abuse referral during 2004	2711
Incarceration during 2004	440
Public financial assistance	201
Food stamps	210
Homeless	121
Medicaid recipient	1223
Health Insurance	781

The most common reason for information not reported on youth cited by agencies is “could not locate youth” for 602 participants. Other reasons include: youth refused to provide some information (66); youth refused to participate in the data collection (61); parent/guardians refused to grant permission (12); and other (118).

*2. Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment*

2004 annual reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections show that 100% of these agencies are assisting youth in the areas of education, training, and employment related services.

All youth are assessed for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance. These assessments, along with youth input, are utilized in developing employment-related goals for the Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP).

IL Coordinators ensure that youth receive training and experiential learning that consists of employment related activities. IL workers assist youth with: procuring of necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work related experience. Community awareness trips and speakers on employment related

services and topics are often utilized. Meetings are arranged with high school counselors and tutors to help assess youth educational needs for employment and provide a support network for youth.

Referral and outreach efforts link youth to community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. These connections may include typical job service programs, such as: Job Corps, local job centers, Workforce Resource Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, job fairs, and other community agencies and private providers. Other linkages may address individual youth needs (e.g., counseling services, medication management, etc) which may impact employment success.

Youth in Milwaukee County may be referred to a pilot project, Former Foster Youth Education and Training Project, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. This project provides youth with services and monthly financial support to enable youth to live independently while attending post-secondary education or training. The project's primary goal is to help youth obtain the education and training needed to become employed and financially self-sufficient. The project manager works closely with the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare to support youth exiting foster care. Currently, this program is only available in Milwaukee County.

Of the 3,750 youth participating in IL services in CY 2004, the following table indicates the number of participants that received planned and/or spontaneous vocational related assistance during the report period:

Table F. Vocational Services

Type of Service/Assistance	# of Youth Receiving Service
Secondary Education	1625
Post Secondary Education	823
Career preparation	1882
Employment programs or vocational training	1348

As noted in Table E, 183 youth were reported as employed full time, and 809 youth were employed part-time as of December. The number of youth that acquired employment-related skills during the report period is 1,056.

3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are assisting youth in the area of post-secondary education and training.

Preparation for post-secondary education must begin several years prior to high school completion. Independent living coordinators continued their work with adolescents to motivate and help them make post-secondary education or training a part of their future

plans. Individual education plans containing individualized goals and objectives are developed for each youth. Coordinators work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting the necessary requirements for post-secondary admission. Where available, youth are connected to pre-college programs.

Independent living services are designed to assess and address youth needs and consist of helping youth with: visiting colleges, applying for admission and financial aide, finding resources available in the community and on campus, obtaining subsidies for educational and training supplies, and dealing with other costs associated with college and training. Caseworkers assist youth with finding safe and stable housing, including individualized efforts to secure housing with relatives or other trusted adults in the area. They also provide ongoing emotional support to youth prior to and while attending the post-secondary institutions.

In 2004, professionals from child welfare, private colleges, technical colleges, and the University of Wisconsin continued their collaboration through the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group. Current HEOY members include representation from Marian College, University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Technical College System, WI Department of Public Instruction, the Division of Children and Family Services and Lad Lake Connections, a private agency serving former foster youth. The group plans to expand its membership in 2005 to include college financial aid and counselor representation.

In 2004, the HEOY Advisory Group continued its panel presentations designed to increase awareness about the youth, problems, and solutions and presented to child welfare caseworkers, various levels of higher education staff, foster parents, and other interested parties across the state. These workshops provide information regarding:

- Educational challenges faced by children placed outside of their homes;
- How to utilize school counselors as a resource for assisting and motivating youth to attend post-secondary vocational and education programs;
- How to help youth and families access state university and private college services and education;
- DCFS scholarship program and dissemination of application forms;
- Brochures and informational handouts for post secondary education; and
- Education and Training Vouchers Program guidelines

In 2004, HEOY expanded its activities and developed foster youth workshops entitled “College is Always a Possibility,” targeting both secondary and post-secondary students. These workshops were held in the southern and western regions in the state, and were well attended by youth, thanks in large part, to pressure from IL Coordinators and foster parents to get youth to the meetings. Most youth admitted not wanting to attend another meeting, but became active participants, agreeing that the meetings were “fun” and definitely worth their while.

The DCFS has a scholarship program that was previously funded with CFCIP IL funding. In 2004, the scholarship program was funded entirely with ETV Program funds. The program provides scholarship awards for IL eligible youth that have been accepted into an institution of higher education. The first years of the scholarship allowed one time only awards up to \$2,500. In 2004, this criterion was revised to allow subsequent awards up to \$5,000 per youth annually. DCFS scholarship awards to youth during the report period amounted to \$304,079.

The following table summarizes scholarship awards during the past three years:

Table G. DCFS Scholarship Program

Year	# of Scholarship Awards	Amount of Scholarship Awards
2001	30	\$ 55,619
2002	52	\$ 87,545
2003	54	\$ 109,250
2004	104	\$304,079

The following table indicates the highest educational certification received and the number of youth in 2004.

Table H. Highest Educational Certification Received

Education	# of Youth
High school diploma or GED/HSED	523
Vocational certificate	14
Vocational license	15
Associate's Degree	2
Bachelor's Degree or higher	0
None	2140
Received special education instruction	929
Completed driver's education	406
Obtained driver's license	244
Completed sex education	1255

4. Provide personal and emotional support through mentors and promotion of interaction with dedicated adults

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are attempting to connect youth with mentors and other caring adults in their communities. 2004 data indicates that 1,236 youth received planned or spontaneous mentoring services during the report period. At the end of the year, 2,254 youth were reported as having a connection to an adult.

Independent living coordinators take the lead in connecting youth to caring adults. Many natural connections (e.g., biological family, foster parents, teachers, social workers, clergy, neighbors, employers and coaches) occur and are encouraged. For youth that do not readily develop significant connections with adults in their lives, coordinators assist youth with creating and sustaining such relationships. IL coordinators help youth identify potential adults in their lives and then work with them to build communication and relationships. The Independent Living Transition Plan requires that names and contact information be recorded for peers or adults identified by youth.

Youth in out-of-home care are often connected to mentors, and these relationships usually continue after the youth leaves care. Mentors may be individuals in the community or obtained through community agencies that provide this support service. Support teams may also be utilized for increasing youth connections to others. IL Coordinators initiate regular contact with any youth that do not connect with mentors or other caring adults. These ongoing connections may be one-on-one with the coordinator or through group activities arranged as part of the IL program. In some areas (e.g., Fond du Lac and Kenosha), transitional living services include a place where youth may drop in and visit staff and other youth at their leisure.

5. *Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years.*

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare indicate that 100% of these agencies have developed services for IL eligible youth aged 18-21 years. The number of 18-21-year-olds receiving services during the report period is 1003. These youth received Chafee funded room and board assistance in the amount of \$98,114.

Agencies report that the most effective way to maintain contact and serve youth ages 18-21 years that have left out-of-home care placement is to engage their participation prior exiting out-of-home care. Programs strive to provide youth with life history and critical documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security cards, and insurance cards) prior to leaving care. All youth also are provided with information about community resources (e.g., food, economic assistance, housing assistance, counseling) prior to leaving care. Many youth maintain contact with former social workers, case managers, or IL coordinators; while others refuse to continue contact with anyone associated with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Regardless of the level of contact, crisis support is available to all youth.

Services and support for 18-21-year-olds may be provided through the agency and IL Coordinator; however, some agencies contract with private agencies to serve this older population. In Milwaukee County, all youth aging out of care are referred to Lad Lake Connections Program. This private agency provides financial, housing, counseling, employment, and other needed services to former foster care youth. Lad Lake staff works closely with and builds positive, familiar relationships with youth. Other Wisconsin private agencies contracted to provide IL services in 2004 include Children's Service

Society of Wisconsin, Professional Services Group, Lutheran Social Services, Kenosha Human Development Services, Family and Children's Center, Children and Family Services, and Family Services.

Outreach efforts to contact youth that have left care are ongoing and moderately successful. The most frequent contact methods used for youth that have left care include letters to the youth and telephone calls to friends, family, and other youth acquaintances. Youth may also be kept informed about available services and assistance through agency newsletters, meeting notices, or group activity notices.

Services typically include financial assistance for youth that have left care. Financial assistance generally includes providing youth with funds or stipends to help pay for rent, utilities, car insurance, health insurance, household furnishings, drivers licenses, and employment and educational expenses. CFCIP funds are often utilized for these types of expenses.

Youth with disabilities or challenging behaviors may need more specialized services and supports to help them achieve individual levels of self-sufficiency. IL Coordinators and caseworkers ensure that, where appropriate, youth are referred and connected to Long-Term Support Programs for mental health, supportive living arrangements, supported employment, ongoing daily needs, mentoring, and other special needs.

Each eligible youth in out-of-home care must have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that is based on an independent living skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. Each youth exiting out-of-home care after the age of 17 years must have an ILTP that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care, identifies ongoing independent living needs and outcomes, and describes how ongoing independent living needs will be met. Youth must participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence.

The plans, services, and activities should address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- High school education, post secondary education, or training
- Career planning and employment
- Safe and stable housing
- Transportation
- Health and medical care
- Knowledge/use of community resources and support systems
- Financial self-sufficiency
- Youth's self goals

The Independent Living Transition Plan and activities should include:

- Measurable goals and objectives
- Experiential training for youth where possible

- Identification of community resources available and utilized
- A description of how youth will participate in plan development and activities

6. *Make available vouchers for education and training, including post-secondary education, to youth who have aged out of foster care.*

Wisconsin's ETV Program was designed and implemented through a collaborative process facilitated by the State Independent Living Coordinator. Independent Living Coordinators throughout the state were surveyed regarding their experiences with IL services and higher education. They were asked to identify potential services, equipment, and other items that would benefit youth accessing and participating in higher education and training programs. A meeting was held with the HEYOY Advisory Group to gather input about the pending ETV Program and the ongoing DCFS Scholarship Program. All of this input was incorporated into the Federal Application for ETV Program funding and state ETV Program Guidelines.

The ETV Program was implemented on January 1, 2004. All counties, three tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and the Division of Juvenile Corrections received ETV funding to locally support and assist youth with post-secondary related activities and costs. The DCFS Scholarship Program funding was increased to \$125,000 for scholarship awards in 2004, but actual awards amounted to \$304,079. All of these scholarships were paid for using ETV Program funds.

Several agencies developed an application process requiring youth to apply for ETV Program assistance. Other agencies reported using a less formal process; i.e., providing ETV assistance as requested by youth as long as the youth is successfully completing his or her post-secondary program. As reported in Table A, 176 youth received ETV Program support and/or financial assistance from local agencies. 104 youth received scholarship awards through the ETV funded DCFS Scholarship Program. The most common use of ETV Program funding was the payment of tuition and fees, followed by the purchase of consumables (e.g., books, supplies, lab fees, uniforms, etc.). Agencies also assisted youth by funding transportation-related costs (e.g., car repairs, gas vouchers, bus passes, etc.), room and board assistance, and purchasing equipment such as computers and calculators.

### Additional Progress Report Items

#### *Extension of Medicaid benefits for foster care youth*

Under the Governor Doyle's KidsFirst plan, the Governor proposed expanding MA coverage for youths up to age 21 leaving out of home care as part of the 2005-2007 biennial budget. The coverage would have been phased in over three years. As these youth have higher than average medical costs, especially in the areas of mental health and substance abuse, this program will assure access to these needed medical services. The proposal, however, was not approved by the Wisconsin Legislature. DCFS will seek consideration of the proposal again in the future.

### ***Barrier to successful transitions to adulthood***

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program is designed to address the CFCIP plan goals and objectives, the June 2000 *Independent Living for Children In Out-Of-Home Care* report, the Chafee Act, and individual youth needs. Several barriers to achieving desirable outcomes in all areas for all youth were encountered. A summary of the most commonly reported barriers follows:

- Many youth, especially 18-21-year-olds, are resistive to agency involvement. They are not motivated and refuse to participate in IL activities. Some do not desire or see the need to pursue higher education.
- Youth with cognitive delays and emotional challenges are difficult to serve effectively as are youth with multiple legal infractions.
- In many rural communities there is a lack of employment opportunities, transportation, service providers, and community resources; all of which are critical to providing quality IL support and helping youth become self sufficient.
- Some foster parents and other caregivers may not see it as their responsibility to help youth gain IL skills. Engaging caregivers to assist and follow-through with youth plans is sometimes challenging. Life skills development is seen as an extra burden and they refuse to participate in training. Also, some youth that reunify with their parent(s) seem to lose interest in their previous agreed upon goals to complete high school and pursue higher education.
- Some agencies refuse to allow youth to participate in driver's education and obtain drivers licenses while in care. The commonly cited reason for this is concern about liability to the agency or foster parents.
- There is a lack of health care options for youth leaving care after 18 years of age.
- There is a lack of housing options for 17-year-olds who do not or will not remain in OHC placement. It is also becoming more challenging to obtain safe and affordable housing for youth 18 years and older.
- Youth with lower skill levels, training and experience are having a very difficult time finding long-term employment which is necessary to achieving self-sufficiency.
- Agencies report ongoing service challenges due to a lack of sufficient IL funding to support their programs. In addition to a lack of IL funding, decreases in IL services may also occur due to agency budget cuts where other funds were used to support these services for youth. Lack of resources also contributes to a lack of staff support and higher staff turnover.

### *Consultation with Tribes*

Consultation with tribes regarding the Chafee Independent Living program occurs through the tribal consultation mechanisms described in the Indian Child Welfare section of this plan. Currently, counties provide Independent Living services to Indian children in placements that counties are fiscally responsible. Three tribes currently have Independent Living contracts with DCFS.

### Use of Chafee Funds in 2004

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program allocates the Federal CFCIP and ETV Program funds to 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare for the provision of independent living services and supports for youth in and exiting foster care and described throughout this report. In 2004, funds were allocated for use as follows:

CFCIP Funds – Independent Living	Amount
State administration of program	\$ 215,447
Local services	\$ 1,739,321
State/local match	\$ 488,692
ETV Program Funds	Amount
State administration of program	\$ 25,000
Local services and DCFS Scholarship Program	\$ 612,913
State/local match	\$ 159,478

## **Tribal Child Welfare**

### Introduction

In conjunction with the Tribal Affairs Office of the Department, the DCFS has several ongoing practices to ensure effective communication with the 11 federally-recognized tribes in Wisconsin and to support tribal child welfare services. The DCFS gives funding directly to the tribes through the Consolidated Family Services Allocation, which eliminates individualized funding streams and assists tribes in providing services to families. The DCFS consults with tribes before issuing standards and policies addressing child welfare concerns and involves tribal staff on interview panels for state staff positions. Tribes, at their option, receive TANF funding for the Kinship Care program and attend Kinship Care program meetings.

Currently, tribes manage services for Indian children in out-of-home care through written agreements, called "161 Agreements," with individual counties. The original intent of the 161 Agreements was to assure county payment for out-of-home care placements ordered through the tribal courts. Some of the agreements have since been expanded to cover support and treatment services to children in care and their families, IV-E eligibility determinations, permanency planning requirements, independent living, and, in some cases, additional agreements related to child protective service investigations and removals. The DCFS monitors the development of the 161 Agreements and at times has arranged for a facilitator to help in negotiating the agreements. The 161 Agreements created a mechanism resulting in improved communication and negotiations between county departments and tribes. We will be working in with tribal representatives in 2005 to examine the effectiveness of the 161 Agreement process and to develop recommendations for increasing their effectiveness.

At the present time, 10 of the 11 tribes in Wisconsin have established tribal courts to deal with child welfare issues. The Tribe with no tribal court and, in some cases, tribes with courts will refer cases to the county child welfare agency. In most cases, when an allegation of abuse or neglect of an Indian child comes into a county agency, the county agency conducts the investigation in conjunction with child welfare staff of the tribe.

### Consultation with Tribes

Communication with the tribes is done through tribal chairpersons or presidents, as the official contact persons for the tribes, and tribal human service program coordinators. Chairpersons and program coordinators receive DCFS letters, numbered memos, and other program instructions.

The primary forum for having group conversations with tribal officials is through the annual DHFS conference addressing human service issues with tribes. Meetings with tribal officials on child welfare issues are coordinated with the conference. Other group meetings with tribal officials are scheduled as needed to discuss specific issues.

For issues involving individual tribes, DCFS communicates with the tribe involved through the tribal chairperson or president or other tribal officials. Individual meetings with tribes are held as needed with DHFS Tribal Affairs Office or Area Administration staff representing DHFS or DCFS or with DCFS directly.

Bimonthly staff meetings are held between DCFS and the Tribal Affairs Office staff with tribal child welfare staff to discuss Indian child welfare issues. These staff meetings are used to identify Indian child welfare issues that require discussion at higher levels with tribal officials and Department managers. Recent staff meetings have focused on ICWA training and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Oneida Tribe facilitated a tribal stakeholder interview for the CFSR in August 2003 and an Oneida child welfare supervisor participated as a CFSR case reviewer.

The DHFS recently concluded a series of meetings with tribal leaders to develop a DHFS Tribal Consultation Policy (attached). This policy is considered a model by the Office of the Governor and will be used as a template by all other state Departments in developing their own tribal consultation policies. This state consultation policy incorporates the principles in the federal Department of Health and Human Services policy on tribal consultation.

A meeting was held on April 19, 2005 between DHFS and tribal staff to begin implementation of the policy, including the development of curricula for training DHFS staff on tribal issues and for training tribal staff on DHFS programs and procedures, including biennial budget development, to increase the timeliness and effectiveness of tribal input into DHFS policies and budgets.

### Indian Child Welfare Act

In Wisconsin, tribes which have a court system utilized to place children into out-of-home care enter into 161 Agreements with the county or counties in which the tribe is geographically located. In essence, these agreements give full faith and credit to the tribe in terms of licensing foster homes and placing children in out-of-home care. The county is then financially responsible for the cost of the placements pursuant to the Agreement. In some cases, the agreement specifies a maximum amount of such funding; in other cases, the amount is open-ended. The agreements also describe in detail which agency (the county or the tribe) is responsible for determining Title IV-E eligibility and for ensuring compliance with federal Section 422 protections for children, including permanency planning requirements, conducting permanency plan reviews, etc.

Over the years, issues have arisen in the negotiation of these agreements. This is due in part to the fact that the state has issued a policy defining what information must be contained in the agreement and suggesting guidelines for what information might be contained in the agreement, but has not developed materials to guide the process of negotiating the agreements.

There have been questions about the role and responsibility of tribes, county Child Protective Services agencies, and the state in child welfare cases that are not covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act. The DCFS requested technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment this year to study the issue and develop guidelines for how the state, county CPS agencies, and tribes can best work together to meet the needs of Indian children.

Training on the ICWA is provided by the Child Welfare Training Partnerships in Wisconsin. A detailed ICWA training is offered in addition to the core course on legal issues, which includes information on the ICWA. The training Partnerships have made available via the web the short on-line ICWA training produced by the National Indian Child Welfare Association. The DCFS provides technical assistance to county child welfare agencies when questions on ICWA compliance arise.

The ICWA training addresses the five major components of ICWA, including:

- 1) Identification of Indian children by the child welfare agency;
- 2) Notification of Indian parents and tribes of State proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene;
- 3) Special placement preferences for Indian children;
- 4) Active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family; and
- 5) Use of tribal courts in child welfare matters; tribal right to intervene in State proceedings or transfer proceedings to the jurisdiction of the tribe.

#### Tribal Child Welfare Priorities

As part of planning activities for the 2005-2009 CFSP and the PEP, Wisconsin's tribes and DCFS worked collaboratively to develop a list of seven tribal priorities for improving child welfare services for Indian children and families. These priorities include:

1. Identifying children as Indian children
2. Training on ICWA, Tribal Codes and Ordinances, and Cultural Issues
3. Adoptions
4. 161 Agreements
5. Foster Home Placements and Resources
6. Safety of Children in Their Own Homes and in Out-of-Home Care
7. Title IV-E Funding for Tribes

Using the bimonthly tribal child welfare meetings, DCFS continues to work with tribes on the seven priorities. As agreements are reached, state policy and training curriculum will be updated to reflect the agreements with tribes. The updated January 2005 draft of the seven priorities is attached to this plan.

Particular progress was made during 2004 on Priority 1, identifying Indian children and ensuring that ICWA notifications are made to tribes. In December of 2004, four templates were added to eWiSACWIS which provide direction and assistance to county caseworkers on determining whether a child is an Indian child. All counties are now required to use these templates in order to assure that the protections and rights of children and families under ICWA are recognized and protected.

#### Inter-Tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership

In 2004, the Child Welfare Training Council agreed with Wisconsin's tribes to form an Inter-tribal Child Welfare (ICW) Training Partnership to better address the training needs of Indian child welfare staff. While tribes are members of the regional training partnerships and attend training with county staff, the unique training needs of tribal staff and Indian child welfare practice were not being met effectively.

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay agreed to provide administrative support to the ICW training Partnership and DCFS agreed to provide financial support for the ICW Training Manager position. The training manager was hired in December 2004 and participates as a member of the Child Welfare Training Council.

The ICW Training Partnership is currently working with the 11 tribes to assess training needs of Indian child welfare staff and develop strategies for meeting those needs.

## **Kinship Care**

### Program Description

The Kinship Care program is a child welfare-oriented financial assistance program funded under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant that was initiated in 1997 when the Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) component of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was terminated. Kinship Care is child welfare program designed to support children at-risk or currently involved in the child protective services system to remain within their extended family structure.

Kinship Care is used to fund voluntary living arrangements with relatives; or court-ordered living arrangements with relatives where the child has been determined to be at-risk of or is currently in need of protection or services (CHIPS). Basic eligibility requirements are as follows:

- a need for the living arrangement
- the living arrangement is in the best interest of the child
- court jurisdiction for a child or juvenile in need of protection or services exists or would exist in the future if the child were to remain with her/his parent(s).

The Kinship Care program is administered locally by county agencies, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and 10 tribes. Agencies determine initial and ongoing eligibility, and make monthly payments in the amount of \$215 per child per month to eligible children and caregivers.

Kinship Care payments are made to relatives by counties and tribes that participate in the program. To comply with federal TANF reporting requirements, a data collection system entitled the Kinship Care Tracking System (KCTS) was developed to establish baseline program information and utilization trends. That data system initially involved paper-based reporting from local agencies, but was later converted to a web-based system in November 2001. As counties implemented the eWiSACWIS system, Kinship Care reported was done in eWiSACWIS. While all counties are currently using eWiSACWIS for Kinship Care, KCTS will continue to be used by the 10 tribes that do not utilize eWiSACWIS.

### Program Requirements

In November 2000, DCFS implemented administrative rule Chapter HFS 58 to support statewide consistency in basic operating procedures regarding the use of the Kinship Care Program and the quality of care provided to children placed or otherwise living with relatives under this program. Kinship Care roundtables were held with county and tribal staff to provide training and discuss regulations and ongoing practices. Direct technical assistance continues to be provided to individual programs as requested.

In July 2002, 2001 Wis. Act 109 was enacted and included provisions clarifying permanency planning requirements for Court Ordered Kinship Care (COKC) cases. Although Milwaukee County had been completing permanency plans for COKC cases since 1998; counties that had not historically completed permanency plans for COKC cases were required to complete plans by the end of CY 2002.

Finally, to help promote a youth's transition to independence, program eligibility for Kinship care was expanded to support care of youth up to 19 years of age if they are attending school, are in good academic standing, and are expected to receive a diploma. This age limit is now the same as foster care.

#### 2004 Program Activity

Counties and tribes receive a sum certain annual allocation based on the year's prior caseload counts. In some instances, local agencies may place children on a wait list for Kinship Care payments until funds become available. While counties/tribes are hesitant to remove children from waitlists (as they are required to sustain all such children into the next fiscal year), DCFS has developed a process to help ensure that more eligible families are able to receive payments if they reside in communities where a funding shortage occurs and wait lists are implemented. DCFS analyzes the current year data for each agency and shifts funds from programs with under-spending to programs with waiting lists and/or over-spending prior to year's end. Although children often still remain in waitlist status, 2004 was the first year where funds DCFS was not able to cover all children whose cases were paid with local funds or were scheduled for removal from the waitlist.

Currently, the TANF Kinship Care payment for eligible children and relative caregivers is set at \$215 per child per month; an amount that has not been changed since the Kinship Care program was created in 1997. Wisconsin remains committed to providing support for children receiving care from kinship care providers. As such, the Department has increased its annual statewide benefits allocation to local entities from \$9,014,200 in CY 2005, to \$9,558,900 for CY 2006, and statewide assessment benefits from \$672,196 in CY 2005 to \$827,700 in CY 2006.

While the statewide Kinship Care caseload had been relatively constant prior to 2004, caseloads have been steadily increasing. The total number of children receiving Kinship Care payments throughout the state of Wisconsin in 2004 was 12,881; approximately 33% higher than last year. In addition, another 1,199 children were either on a waiting list for payments or receiving payments through local agency dollars. Of the 2004 caseload, about 1,856 children were in court-ordered Kinship Care placements with relatives subject to permanency planning and ongoing case management and 11,025 children were with living with relatives on a voluntary basis. In many instances, COKC cases become voluntary cases if the child is permanently placed with the relative and the court order is ended.

## **Title IV-E Foster Care**

### Introduction

The Title IV-E foster care program provides out-of-home placement and permanency planning services to children in need of placement due to abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency or other service needs. Out-of-home placements include foster homes licensed by counties, tribes, DCFS or private child placing agencies, treatment foster homes licensed by private child placing agencies, group foster homes licensed by DCFS, and residential care centers (RCCs) licensed by DCFS. Children receiving Kinship Care payments placed with relatives under court order (COKC) are also in out-of-home care state law and entitled to Title IV-E protections and permanency planning services.

The out-of-home care caseload in Wisconsin is approximately 7,500 at any point in time, with approximately 4,300 children placed in foster homes, 700 in treatment foster homes, 1,000 in group homes or RCCs, and 1,500 in COKC. Of the total caseload, approximately 41% is located in Milwaukee County, 5% are pre-adoptive children with the Special needs Adoption Program awaiting adoptive placement, and the remaining 54% are managed by county child welfare agencies. Youth in placement for juvenile delinquency reasons account for approximately 20% of the point-in-time caseload, but over 30% of the total entries to out-of-home care over the course of the year.

Under Title IV-E, reasonable efforts must be made to prevent removal from the home and to reunify the child once removed. If reunification is not possible, other forms of permanency must be pursued including adoption, guardianship and permanent placement with relatives. As a last resort, children may remain in out-of-home care on a long-term basis until they reach the age of 18. Children can remain in foster care until age if they are completing high school or an equivalent degree.

### Permanency Planning

Permanency planning procedures are specified under state statute. State statutory changes were adopted as part of 2001 Wisconsin Act 109, effective July 30, 2002. Act 109 provides statutory direction affecting Wisconsin child welfare and juvenile justice law in several areas, including provisions to improve the programmatic implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

Major components of Act 109 include:

- Reasonable efforts to achieve the goals of the permanency plan (REPP) finding - Provided clear statutory authority for courts to make REPP findings and established that the finding must be made within 12 months after the date the child is removed from the home and every 12 months from the date of the previous finding.
- Termination of dispositional orders - Removed the requirement that the dispositional order be extended on an annual basis for children in out-of-home care and instead required that a Permanency Plan Hearing be held every 12 months from the date the child is removed from the home. This change addressed problems under prior

Wisconsin law where delays in extending dispositional orders could result in delays in reviewing permanency plans.

- Permanency planning requirements for the court-ordered Kinship Care population.
- Other changes to conform with federal requirements for Title IV-E eligibility of children.

DCFS continues to work with the Director of State Courts Office and the Division of Juvenile Correction to provide training to child welfare staff, juvenile justice staff, judges, and attorneys on Act 109 requirements and ASFA.

The DCFS has developed a draft administrative rule related to permanency planning and reasonable efforts known as Chapter HFS 44. This rule establishes state policies that have the force of law related to the requirements for assuring that reasonable efforts are made to prevent a placement, to reunify a child with his or her family, or to achieve another permanent placement for the child. The rule also describes the processes and practices related to conducting administrative hearings (i.e., permanency plan reviews).

The DCFS received substantial input on the administrative rule from a variety of agencies and will conduct public hearings as the draft rule proceeds through the rule process. Currently, a diverse committee representing both child welfare and juvenile justice is examining the most recent draft of this rule. It is anticipated that the rule will be submitted for legislative review in late 2005.

The DCFS is working with the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections to determine how the draft rule will apply to juvenile justice clients in out-of-home care. When the rule is promulgated, the DCFS and the Division of Juvenile Corrections will issue a joint communication to counties.

DCFS has also developed state standards and guidelines for the ongoing case management of all child welfare cases, including out-of-home care cases. These standards and guidelines address case planning and services for children and families while children are in care. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* were issued in 2002 and are designed to complement the permanency planning administrative rule. The standards and guidelines for ongoing case management are expected to improve permanency outcomes for children and reduce lengths of stay in care.

### Supports to Foster Parents

DCFS recognizes the critical link between the success of a child served within the child welfare system and the supports provided to those who care for these children. Through the creation of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, the commitment to increase foster care reimbursement, and increased support for training of foster families, the DCFS worked throughout the past year to better support foster families and improve the foster care system. In addition to supporting foster families, DCFS engaged foster youth in conversation and activities to provide youth with opportunities to improve the foster care system and help other foster youth.

### *Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center*

Both Governor Doyle's *KidsFirst* Initiative and Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) include the creation of a statewide Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center. From May through August 2004, DCFS staff gathered information from focus groups across the state to determine the unmet needs of foster parents, adoptive parents, and foster care coordinators. Based upon these stakeholder meetings, DCFS developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selected a consortium of three agencies, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, PATH Wisconsin, Inc, and St. Aemilian-Lakeside, Inc., to develop and operate the Resource Center. Their proposal included the development of three sites across Wisconsin to reach statewide while, at the same time, addressing regional needs.

The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center will work with both statewide and local agencies to distribute general information, provide technical assistance for the development of localized recruitment plans, create a model foster parent handbook, increase access to training opportunities, and make connections with regional Post-Adoption Resource Centers. With four staff and the benefit of an Advisory Council, the Resource Center is expected to quickly grow in scope and array of information. The budget, totaling \$741,500, extends from January 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006 with annual renewals.

### *Financial Support*

In his *KidsFirst* Initiative released in the spring of 2004, Governor Jim Doyle acknowledged the low reimbursement rate foster parents receive in Wisconsin and the impact that has on the state's ability to recruitment quality foster homes. He established his commitment to increasing the basic reimbursement rate for foster parents in Wisconsin and laid the groundwork for introducing increases to the basic reimbursement rate in the next budget cycle.

The DCFS continued to advocate for increases in the basic foster care rate paid to foster parents to achieve a level equal to the average basic rate for the other states in federal Region V; however, due to state budget limitations, the basic foster home reimbursement rate in 2004 remained at the 2001 reimbursement rate level.

In his 2005-2007 budget bill, Governor Doyle proposed a 5% increase in the basic maintenance rate for CY 2006 and an additional 5% increase in the basic rate for CY 2007. A 5% rate increase for CY 2006 was approved as part of the final budget bill, 2005 Wis. Act 25. With the rate increase, the basic maintenance rates will be:

Age	Current Law	January 1, 2006
0 through 4	\$302	\$317
5 through 11	329	346
12 through 14	375	394
15 and older	391	411

In Wisconsin, special needs of a child may result in additional reimbursement to a foster parent, through the supplemental and exceptional components of the foster care rate structure. The PEP development process identified areas DCFS and stakeholders need to examine in the upcoming year in order to better support foster parents financially.

### *Supportive Services*

Supportive services critical to the ability of foster parents to provide quality care include access to respite, childcare services, and health insurance. The DCFS continues ongoing work with foster parents, adoptive parents, foster youth and foster care coordinators to identify other areas and services to support the foster care system.

DCFS implemented revisions, effective March 2002, to the family foster care licensing administrative rule known as Chapter HFS 56. In the rule revision, the DCFS established qualifications for individuals who provide respite for children in family foster care. Recognizing that Wisconsin counties may or may not currently have formal respite programs for their foster parents, the rule revision does not specify standards for the amount of respite for family foster care.

Child care funding under the Wisconsin Shares child care program is available for working foster parents and relative caregivers and children needing specialized childcare services. The Wisconsin Shares program does not cover crisis or respite child care, which can be provided by county human service agencies. DCFS works with the Office of Child Care in the Department of Workforce Development to identify resources and current policies which impact the provision of child care services for foster parents.

In addition, the DCFS has worked with the Division of Health Care Financing to develop a pilot to provide managed health care services to children in out-of-home care in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare system. A managed care provider has been selected for the pilot, which will begin in 2006. The pilot is expected to improve access to health, dental and mental health services for foster children and test the use of managed care for the out-of-home care population..

### *Foster Parent Training Resources*

In Wisconsin, counties, private child placing agencies, and some tribes license foster homes and also maintain responsibility for recruiting, training, and re-licensing foster homes. In 2004, the DCFS received applications from over 34 counties to access Title IV-E funding for competency-based, pre-service training for foster parents through a funding mechanism established in 2002. In order for counties to obtain funding, their applications must include specific competencies and utilize child welfare staff and foster parents as co-trainers. In addition, the training must be interactive and encourage discussion of issues and skills of both the foster parents and caseworkers.

The goal of this IV-E foster parent training program is to assure quality, competency-based pre-service training to foster parents and to provide increased funding to counties

who meet the established expectations. Many smaller counties who did not have the resources or staff to conduct their own training sessions partnered with surrounding counties to provide the PACE training to their foster families. Additional counties provided the PACE training or other training curriculums without state oversight financial support.

Wisconsin does not have a mandated training program for foster parents, but many licensing agencies have their own orientation and training requirements. Building upon the success many agencies have had with training of foster parents, the PEP focuses on foster parent training as an area that will be examined in upcoming months.

### Programmatic Supports

The DCFS has identified several program areas critical to the quality of care that foster parents are able to provide for children temporarily in their care. These programmatic supports include ensuring provision of information critical to the care of children in temporary out-of-home care, participation in and access to competency-based training, and the recruitment and continued availability of qualified licensed foster care providers.

The DCFS has promulgated an administrative rule that describes the information that must be provided by the placing agency to the foster parent or other physical custodian. [Ref. Chapter HFS 37, Adm. Code] This information is critical in order for the foster parents or other physical custodians to appropriately respond to the needs of the child, to assure the safety of and protection for the child, and to protect the foster parent and his or her family and property. The DCFS has also revised the Information for Foster Parents form to assure that critical information regarding the child is provided to the foster parent no later than the time the child is actually placed in the home.

### Involvement of Foster Youth

In the spring of 2004, the DCFS brought together youth who are currently in or were recently in out-of-home-care and created a Youth Advisory Council for teens and young adults. The aim of the Youth Advisory is to give youth a voice about their experiences in foster care and to provide the DCFS with an opportunity to develop and implement policy changes based upon recommendations from the youth. In addition, the youth developed their own mission to “help other kids in foster care.”

Over the past year, members of the Youth Advisory Council have presented to various groups, including Lutheran Social Services – First Choice for Children, the foster home licensing agency in Milwaukee, about their experience in foster care and their recommendations for improving the foster care system. They have connected with community groups and raised awareness about the struggles foster youth experience and what it feels like to be in foster care. Through this group, the DCFS will continually evaluate and examine ways to improve the foster care system to better support foster children.

#### Title IV-E Eligibility

DCFS performs Title IV-E eligibility determinations on behalf of counties through a Statewide Eligibility Unit (SEU) that operates in the five DCFS regional offices and the Milwaukee Eligibility Unit (MEU) that operates in the BMCW Administrative Office. DCFS contracts for SEU and MEU services and the contractor is responsible for collecting information necessary for eligibility and making eligibility recommendations. The eligibility recommendations are reviewed and approved by state staff, either BPP, BMCW or OSF Area Administrative staff depending on the location and type of case.

The state approval of contractor recommendations is currently done using a paper process where approvals are recorded in the eligibility files. The initial federal SACWIS review in September 2004 identified the need to automate the state approval process in the eWiSACWIS system where the eligibility determinations are recorded. DCFS has pursued a change to the eWiSACWIS system to automate the state signoffs that will be implemented as part of the September 2005 maintenance release.

Wisconsin underwent a Title IV-E secondary review of 150 cases in May 2005 as a result of having exceeded the error threshold in the initial IV-E review in 2002. Wisconsin passed the secondary review with only one error case and only five cases with ineligible payments. During the course of the secondary reviews, questions were raised by the federal review team regarding the extent that Wisconsin court orders provide clear responsibility for placement and care of children. The questions were resolved by seeking an opinion from the Wisconsin Attorney General in June 2005. To clarify the placement and care responsibility, DCFS will seek statutory changes in the 2005-06 legislative session and modifications to standard court forms once the statutory changes have been made.

## **Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare**

### Introduction

In 1998, DCFS implemented the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) to assume direct administrative responsibility for child welfare service delivery in Milwaukee County. State staff assess reports of abuse and neglect, perform child protective service intake and assessment functions, and refer cases for further services. Contracted service providers deliver in-home safety services, ongoing case management, and other child welfare functions. The use of contracted service providers in Milwaukee is considered a national model for public/private management of the child welfare program.

The *BMCW Standards of Practice* continue to be updated to support the consistency, quality, and timeliness of child protective services and out-of-home care. The *Standards* include assessment of and response to ensure child safety and the development and implementation of service plans to support family change.

Staff training continues to be a major emphasis of the BMCW to improve the quality of services. All new staff receive extensive training on the *BMCW Standards* prior to taking on cases. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the BMCW established a child welfare training partnership in 2001 that offers courses to improve the core competencies of caseworkers. The core courses were offered beginning in July 2002. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the BMCW implemented a competency-based supervisory training program based on the supervisory curricula produced by the CWLA. State and vendor agency supervisors and key management staff continue to participate together in this specialized training program designed to support supervisory competencies, leadership skills, and organizational performance.

The BMCW continues to emphasize desired program outcomes within the Milwaukee child welfare program through the use of performance-based contracts. Performance outcomes consistent with the federal performance indicators are incorporated into service contracts with service agencies. Contractor performance is monitored through comprehensive case and program reviews by the BMCW Program Evaluation Managers.

### Settlement Agreement

In December 2002, a settlement agreement was approved by the Federal district court for the Jeanine B. case involving the BMCW. The settlement agreement ended several years of litigation in the Jeanine B. case over compliance with federal Title IV-E requirements and established a number of program improvement goals for the BMCW. The settlement agreement includes monitoring performance over a 3-year period (Calendar Years 2003 - 2005) with improvement targets for each of the three years. The performance standards and monitoring items are in the areas of Safety, Permanency and Well Being.

The following data present the performance of BMCW during Period 2 (January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004) of the Settlement Agreement. The data is presented in three distinct categories: targets the BMCW met or exceeded for Period 2, targets not met for Period 2; and items reported for monitoring purposes only. Following these descriptions is a table that shows actual year-end Period 1 and Period 2 performance for each category along with Period 3 performance measures.

***Category 1 - Settlement sections where the BMCW met or exceeded Period 2 targets:***

**PERMANENCY**

- ❑ The Settlement identifies two specific areas in relation to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regarding termination of parental rights or exception reasons: (1) At least 65% of children reaching the end of their 15<sup>th</sup> of the most recent 22 months in out-of-home care (OHC) shall have a TPR petition filed on their behalf or an available ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> month in care, and (2) At least 75% of children in care for more than 15 of the most recent 22 months for whom BMCW was not in compliance with ASFA as of the start of the review period shall have a TPR petition filed on their behalf or an available ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the period. BMCW met both of the ASFA compliance standards for Period 2 with 88.2% for item 1 and 92.9% for item 2.
- ❑ The Settlement requires that the BMCW assess the length of stay of children in OHC placements greater than 24 months (measured against baseline of 5,533). The Settlement requires no more than 35% in care greater than 24 months. The BMCW met this performance expectation with a YTD average of 30.2%.

**SAFETY**

- ❑ The Settlement requires that (1) CPS reports must be referred for investigation to the Independent Investigation Agency within 3 business days, and (2) Independent Investigations at the agency need to be assigned to an Investigator within 3 days of referral, and (3) all independent investigations need to be completed and have a determination within 60 days of referral. In all three areas, the BMCW exceeded the Period 2 expectation with 99.4% for item 1, 99.8% for item 2, and 98.1% for item 3.

**WELL-BEING**

- ❑ The Settlement tracks the average number of family cases per case manager. Currently, the BMCW is in overall compliance with the Period 2 expectation with approximately 10 families assigned to each Ongoing Case Manager with a performance standard of less than 11 families per case manager. Four of the five sites met compliance for all 12 months, and one site met compliance in 11 of the 12 months.

- ❑ The Settlement also requires that the Ongoing Case Managers have direct monthly face-to-face contact with a minimum of 90% of the children (children in Milwaukee and contiguous counties). The BMCW met this standard for Period 2 with 97%.

***Category 2 - Settlement sections where the BMCW did not meet Period 2 targets:***

**PERMANENCY**

- ❑ The Settlement requires that 20% of adoptions finalized occur within 24 months of the child's removal from home and entry into OHC. The BMCW's performance did not meet the expectation, but showed improvement when compared to Period 1, with a performance level of 15.5%.
- ❑ The Settlement also requires the BMCW to determine the number of children who have been reunified within 12 months of entry into OHC. During Period 2, the performance standard was 65%. During Period 2, 63% of the 704 children reunified in Period 2 were reunified within 12 months or less. The BMCW did not meet the performance standard for Period 2.

**SAFETY**

- ❑ The Settlement tracks the percentage of children in BMCW custody who are victims of substantiated abuse or neglect by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed, establishing a threshold of (.65%) for Period 2. BMCW was over the threshold limit with (.85%).

**WELL BEING**

- ❑ Placement Stability – At least 82% percent of children in out-of-home care within the period shall have had three or fewer placements after January 1, 1999, during their current placement episode. The number of placements will exclude time-limited respite care placements and returns to the same caretaker after an intervening placement during the same out-of-care episode. Those children in BMCW custody through the Wraparound Milwaukee program shall be excluded from this calculation. The BMCW achieved 72.1%, so did not meet this performance standard.

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare will implement a corrective action plan in 2005 to address the four Settlement Agreement provisions where compliance was not achieved during Period 2.

A corrective action plan was implemented in 2004 to address the three Settlement Agreement provisions where compliance was not achieved during Period 1. The brief results of the 2004 corrective action plan were:

- I.B.4 Length of Stay: The Length of Stay performance goal was achieved by BMCW during Period 2.
- I.B.7 Adoption: Although there was an increase (1.3%) in the percentage of children adopted within 24 months between Period 1 and Period 2, the BMCW did not achieve the performance goal in Period 2.
- I.D.9 Placement Stability: The BMCW did not meet the Period 2 performance goals during Period 2.

### ***Category 3 - Settlement sections for monitoring purposes:***

The outcomes in the final section of the summary do not have an identified performance expectation standard indicated in the settlement, but the BMCW goal is to achieve 100%.

#### **PERMANENCY**

- ❑ The settlement tracks to ensure that all children's (1) initial permanency plans are completed within 60 days of entry into OHC and (2) that all children have a current Judicial Permanency Plan Review or Permanency Plan Review. The BMCW achieved 97% for item 1 and 77.1% for item 2.
- ❑ The BMCW is also required to monitor "re-entry" of children previously in OHC within 12 months of exiting OHC. Of the 1,308 children who entered OHC between January and December 2004, 86 of the 154 children who re-entered care, or 55.8%, re-entered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. During Period 2 the Re-Entry rate for children who re-entered within 12 or fewer months was 6.7%.

#### **WELL BEING**

- ❑ The BMCW also tracks (1) the timeframe for completion of family assessments (must be completed within 90 days), and (2) the distribution of Placement Packet information to Foster Parents. The BMCW met 97.3% for completion of Family Assessments, and 85% for distribution of the Placement Packets.
- ❑ The average number of children per Ongoing Case Manager is also monitored, but there is no standard. Although this is by Ongoing Site, the estimated BMCW average is 19.5 children per Case Manager.
- ❑ Also monitored are (1) children's Initial Health Checks (CPC) within 5 business days of first placement as recorded in eWiSACWIS, and (2) children with an up-to-date physical and dental exam recorded in eWiSACWIS. Estimated YTD performance for CPC health checks and annual medical and dental exams remained under 85%.

- Turnover - Overall, the BMCW experienced a turnover rate of Ongoing Case Manager staff in excess of 38% in Period 2 (CY 2004). Continued efforts to further explore the turnover issue and how to address improving staff retention remain in the forefront of issues the BMCW is working on during CY 2005. It is an important area of focus in the Governor's Kids First agenda.

The following table provides actual performance data for Period 2 (CY 2004) and Period 1 (CY 2003), what the standards were for Period 2 and Period 1, and what the standards change to in Period 3 (CY 2005).

### BMCW Settlement Agreement at a Glance Period 2 (January - December 2004)

[illegible]

## **VI. Other Required Plan Information**

### **Juvenile Justice Transfers**

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children in the custody of child welfare agencies who are transferred to the custody of juvenile justice agencies. Federal guidance has not been provided regarding the specific information needed to meet this requirement.

The eWiSACWIS system is used to track all placements of children in out-of-home placements subject to federal permanency planning requirements. For children placed in out-of-home care for child welfare reasons (under Chapter 48, the Children's Code) who are subsequently adjudicated delinquent or a juvenile in need of protection or services (under Chapter 938, the Juvenile Justice Code), the legal status window in eWiSACWIS can be used to record the change in legal status. However, since DCFS does not manage the Wisconsin juvenile justice program, counties are not required to use eWiSACWIS to track all juvenile justice placements. Thus it may not be possible to identify all transfers of custody from child protective services to juvenile justice.

While Wisconsin will continue to study the potential to collect this information, specific data collection steps will not be implemented until federal guidance has been provided.

### **Diligent Recruitment**

Wisconsin is committed to recruiting foster and adoptive parents that reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the children in out-of-home care.

Wisconsin has used recruitment campaigns included radio, television, and movie trailer ads. The recruitment efforts covered limited periods and were successful at increasing information requests about being a foster/adoptive parent. Unfortunately, there were extremely limited funds available to sustain or build on the recruitment effort. DCFS did develop a recruitment video that counties could use with prospective foster families.

Foster care coordinators, local agency staff who focus on recruitment, licensing, training, and retention of foster homes, have reported to DCFS that they find localized and targeted recruitment activities to be more effective than broad, statewide recruitment activities. Based upon that feedback and the reported need for localized recruitment ideas, DCFS required the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to provide technical assistance to agencies or consortiums of agencies in the development of recruitment resources specific to their regional or localized needs.

Lutheran Social Services – First Choice for Children and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, partner agencies with the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, conducted various recruitment activities in 2004 in the Milwaukee area to expand their pool of foster and adoptive families.

Wisconsin has found word-of-mouth to be one of our greatest recruitment tools. DCFS has also found that a large percentage of special needs adoptions, more than 85% in the state and more than 95% in BMCW, are the result of foster home conversions. With so many families moving from foster care to adoption to provide permanent homes for children, counties have experienced a depletion of resources. As a result, in Wisconsin, our future recruitment efforts will be for foster/adoptive parents with more emphasis on training and preparation of these resources for the challenges they will encounter.

Accordingly, more emphasis is placed on local recruitment activities to reach families that can meet the needs of the children in care. Special emphasis is being placed on targeted recruitment. DCFS is currently working with AdoptUSKids as a pilot state to address recruitment needs. DCFS will be doing benchmarking initially in the areas of Indian family recruitment and recruitment of families willing to accept sibling groups of 3 or more children and may move into other targeted ethnic areas of need. AdoptUSKids has been in Wisconsin two days already in 2005 and DCFS plans to have them back for several more days of technical assistance.

While foster and adoptive parent recruitment was not identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR, DCFS believes it is an area where Wisconsin can do better.

#### *Wisconsin Statewide Recruitment Goals*

In collaboration with counties and tribes, the DCFS will work to develop a pool of waiting families to meet the diverse needs of children in out-of-home care (OHC). Specific strategies that will be used include the following:

1. Develop a consistent recruitment campaign with materials that can be used by local agencies to build on the recognition gained from the statewide activities.
2. Continue to improve use of recruitment and retention data to enable agencies to make program improvement decisions based upon current and accurate data concerning family recruitment and retention.
3. Operate a well-respected and effective permanency consultation program to work with counties, tribes, and private agencies.
4. Collaborate with counties, tribes, and private agencies to identify relatives, especially paternal relatives. Develop policies and procedures to increase the identification of relatives as placement resources.
5. Provide support and training to counties, tribes and private agencies to improve the community and cultural responsiveness of their recruitment and retention, including access to services (e.g., Medical Assistance)

## **VII. Child Welfare Demonstration Projects**

Wisconsin has one Title IV-E Demonstration project, the Subsidized Guardianship Program.

The Subsidized Guardianship Program is part of a comprehensive Guardianship Permanency Initiative to improve permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home care by promoting the use of permanent legal guardianship as a permanency option. While guardianship has long existed as a permanency outcome for children, the lack of ongoing payments to guardians to care for children once permanency has been achieved has limited the effectiveness of guardianship as a permanency outcome and results in foster care cases remaining open longer than necessary to continue payments to the caretakers.

The IV-E waiver allows Wisconsin to operate the Subsidized Guardianship program to provide ongoing payments to persons becoming legal guardians of children in foster care, similar to the adoption assistance program for children who are adopted. The target population for the Subsidized Guardianship program is children placed with relatives licensed as foster parents. The subsidized guardianship program will make guardianship more feasible as a permanency outcome and improve the permanency options available for children placed with relatives.

The Guardianship Permanency Initiative is based on the following principles:

- Improving permanency outcomes for children and families through more effective permanency planning that is family-focused.
- Promoting the use of relatives as foster care placement resources.
- Ensuring the safety and well being of children through permanent placements with caring adults whom will raise the children to adulthood.
- Providing services to families in ways that address the needs of children but minimizes the public child welfare involvement in the lives of families.
- Operating the subsidized guardianship program in a manner similar to the adoption assistance program.

The Wisconsin waiver request was initially submitted in September 2002 and resubmitted in January 2004. The federal waiver request was approved in September 2004. State enabling legislation to clarify the use of guardianship as a permanency option and establish the subsidized guardianship payment program was approved as part of the Governor's 2005-2007 state budget bill, 2005 Wis. Act 25. Initial implementation of the Subsidized Guardianship program is planned for September 2005. Once implemented, the program can be operated for five years under the federal waiver, which can be renewed.

The subsidized guardianship program will be implemented initially in Milwaukee County by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. Approximately 175 children with existing guardianship orders will be converted to subsidized guardianship in the Fall of 2005. A guardianship subsidy agreement must be completed before payments can be made to guardian caretakers. Approximately 650 children in Milwaukee will be part of the target population for the program over the 5-year period.

The waiver request includes the potential to expand the program to the rest of the state, although no timeframe has been set for expansion of the program. Other counties will have to agree to the terms of the waiver to participate in the program. At the current time, the number of relatives licensed as foster parents is limited outside of Milwaukee, so many counties may not have significant numbers of children in the target population.

As a condition of the federal waiver, the guardianship program must be cost neutral to the federal government and an independent program evaluation including random assignment of cases must be conducted. Target population cases will be assigned to experimental and control groups for evaluation purposes, with only the experimental group being eligible for subsidized guardianship payments. The DCFS will conduct a request for Proposals (RFP) process in 2005 to select the evaluator. Random assignment will begin in January 2006, once federal approval has been obtained for the evaluation plan submitted by the evaluator.

The first waiver progress report was submitted by DCFS to the federal Children's Bureau and the Administration for Children and Families Chicago regional Office in June 2005, and the next progress report will be submitted in September 2005.

## **VIII. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

In August 2003, the Wisconsin child protective services program was evaluated by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and was the 43<sup>rd</sup> state to undergo this Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). As occurred in every state, the ACF reviewed 50 cases in three counties which were intended to represent performance across the state, held focus groups, and evaluated data and a state self-assessment. Like every other state in the nation, Wisconsin was found in substantial non-conformance with many of the outcomes in the CFSR.

The following outcome areas and systemic factors must be addressed in the PEP:

- Safety Outcome 1 - Protection of children from abuse and neglect
- Safety Outcome 2 - Maintain children safely in their homes where appropriate
- Permanency Outcome 1 - Permanence and stability of living situations
- Permanency Outcome 2 - Preserving continuity of family relationships
- Well-Being Outcome 2 - Educational services to children
- Well-Being Outcome 3 - Physical and mental health services
- Case Review System - Written case plans and regular permanency hearings
- Quality Assurance - State program standards and quality assurance activities
- Staff and Provider Training - Training for local agency staff and foster parents
- Service Array - Services available to children and families

The state received its CFSR results in January 2004, and was given 90 days to produce a statewide program improvement plan in response. The Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) was submitted to ACF in April 2004 and was approved effective November 1, 2004. Wisconsin will implement the PEP over the two-year period of November 1, 2004 through October 31, 2006.

The PEP was created through a collaborative process that occurred over a period of seven months, and was guided by an internal planning team consisting of the DCFS Administrator, Bureau and Office Directors, and a Facilitator/Coordinator. The internal planning team recruited a PEP Core Team of more than sixty (60) child welfare experts, including representatives of counties, tribes, advocates, and other stakeholders, to develop improvement strategies for the PEP.

The Core Team began by identifying the underlying conditions in families, communities, child welfare agencies, and state government that impact Wisconsin's child welfare operations and performance. The Core Team identified overarching strategies for program improvement and developed and prioritized specific action steps to improve CFSR outcomes within the two-year timeframe. The work of the PEP Team was instrumental in reaching agreement on the overarching strategies that form the basis for the state objectives for 2005-2009 described in Section IV of this plan.

The Core Team selected the final PEP action steps by applying three strategic criteria. Action steps must be: 1) perceived by the Core Team as effective in addressing the very

specific findings of the CFSR; 2) substantially achievable within two years; and 3) practicable within the constraints of the current fiscal environment and the authority of child welfare agencies. These action steps are included in the 2005-2009 plan.

The full PEP, including the "PEP matrix" which identifies the specific action steps and PEP quarterly progress reports, is available at:

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>

#### Status of PEP Implementation

To Implement the PEP, DCFS formed the PEP Implementation Team consisting of members from the former Child Welfare executive Steering Committee and the PEP Core team. The Implementation Team was created as a collaborative, cross-systems approach that will guide planning and implementation of child welfare practice and policy in order to achieve the federal performance outcomes and enhance services to Wisconsin's children and families. The Implementation Team is comprised of over 80 individuals representing a wide array of diverse fields, including domestic abuse, schools, law enforcement, juvenile justice, state courts, mental health, substance abuse, and child protective services. In addition, the Implementation Team has representation from foster and adoptive parents, tribes, and state legislators. The first meeting of the Implementation Team occurred on November 29, 2004 and the Implementation Team will meet quarterly during the two-year PEP period

In addition to the full PEP Implementation Team, the Division of Children and Family Services created the following PEP committees to help shape the policies, procedures, and practices needed to complete the 20 Action Steps identified in the Wisconsin PEP. The PEP Implementation Team will meet on a quarterly basis and each committee will meet at least monthly. The following are the PEP Committees and their responsibilities:

- ***PEP Executive Committee***  
The Executive Committee of the full PEP Implementation Team will meet between the PEP Implementation Team meetings to assist DCFS in creating long term goals and strategies for the PEP Implementation Team, including the development of the agendas for the quarterly meetings.
- ***Child Welfare Case Process***  
The Child Welfare Case Process Committee will clarify and develop policies and guidelines for standards of practice related to Access/Intake, Initial Assessment, and Ongoing Services. In addition, this Committee will address issues related to domestic violence and other child welfare associated programs and system.

- *Out-of-Home Care*  
The Out-of-Home Care Committee will enhance policies, practices, and procedures related to out-of-home placement, Title IV-E, Permanency Planning, Independent Living, Kinship Care, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).
- *Adoption Services*  
The Adoption Services Committee will develop and update policies, practices, and procedures related to Concurrent Permanency Planning, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), Adoption, Adoption Search, and Adoption Assistance payments.
- *Continuous Quality Improvement*  
The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee will design and begin the implementation of a case review model and identify the management and program information needs/reports of the counties and the tribes.

In addition, when issues arise that involve tribal child welfare or training for child welfare staff and providers, the existing Indian Child Welfare Group and Child Welfare Training Council will be consulted for expertise and guidance.

#### National Performance Standards

The CFSR process includes analyses of statewide data as reported for NCANDS and AFCARS purposes on six safety and permanency measures. For the Wisconsin CFSR review, the state was determined to be in non-conformance with five of the six measures. The PEP action steps, while targeted at specific aspects of performance, are also designed to improve statewide performance on the national standards. The final approved PEP will include specific improvement targets for the five measures.

The following table shows state performance on the national performance standards for FFY 2004. For the permanency items, the data is from the AFCARS foster care file. For the safety items, the data is from state sources approved by the Administration for Children and Families Chicago Regional Office and the Children's Bureau.

Wisconsin Achievement of National Performance Standards in FFY 2004						
Performance Standards	National Standard (Percent)	WI Data 2001 (Percent)	WI Data 2002 (Percent)	WI Data 2003 (Percent)	Minimum Improvement Target (Percent)	WI Data 2004 (Percent)
<b>Safety Outcome 1 – Recurrence of Maltreatment</b> Of all children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of the year, what percent were victims of another substantiated report within a 6-month period?	6.1 or less	6.99	6.04	7.13	6.23	5.25
<b>Safety Outcome 1 – Maltreatment While in Care</b> Of all children in out-of-home care in the first 9 months of the year, what percent experienced maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57 or less	0.61	0.26	0.30	Standard Met	0.57
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Re-entry to Care</b> Of all children who entered out-of-home care in the year, what percent were re-entering care within 12 months of a prior out-of-home care episode?	8.6 or less	25.5	22.2	21.5	20.15	18.9
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Timely Reunification</b> Of all children reunified from out-of-home care in the year, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care?	76.2 or more	71.0	66.5	65.2	67.62	70.1
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Timely Adoption</b> Of all children adopted from out-of-home care in the year, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into out-of-home care?	32.0 or more	21.2	17.5	17.8	20.7	21.7
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Placement Stability</b> Of all children in out-of-home care during the year for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7 or more	93.8	92.3	92.6	Standard Met	90.5

**Data Sources:**

- Safety Outcomes- 2001-2003 figures are based on estimates derived from alternate methodology approved by the federal Children's Bureau; the 2004 figures are derived solely from WiSACWIS Maltreatment Recurrence and Maltreatment in Out of Home Care Outcome reports.
- Permanency Outcomes- 2001-2004 are based on data profile figures generated by the federal Children's Bureau using the state's FFY AFCARS submissions.

## **IX. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

This section of the Child and Family Services Plan addresses the seven systemic factors that are examined in the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) of state child welfare programs. The systemic factors relate to the infrastructure of the child welfare service system that supports the delivery of effective services to children and families. This section of the plan also covers research and evaluation activities.

The results of the 2003 Wisconsin CFSR identified information system capacity, responsiveness to the community, and foster and adoptive parent recruitment as strengths. The results identified case review system, quality assurance, training, and service array as areas needing improvements. Specific action steps to address the CFSR results are included in the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), approved effective November 1, 2004.

### **A. Information System Capacity**

Wisconsin completed implementation in 2004 of a comprehensive Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, currently called eWiSACWIS, which is used by all county child welfare agencies, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). The eWiSACWIS project began development in March 1999 with a donor SACWIS system transferred from New Mexico. The DHFS contracted with American Management Systems, Inc. (AMS) to fully implement the WiSACWIS and roll the system out to all counties statewide.

The eWiSACWIS system was implemented in phases and the last group of counties implemented the system in June, 2004, at which point eWiSACWIS became fully operational statewide.

- **Phase 1** involved implementation of the system in 2000 by BMCW and SNAP. Phase 1 was completed in December 2000.
- **Phase 2** involved statewide expansion and began in 2001. Counties implemented the system starting in October 2001 generally in groups of 10 to 12 counties every four months for the statewide rollout. The last group of 14 counties implemented the system in June 2004.
- **Phase 3** started in 2002 and involves converting the original WiSACWIS system from a traditional client server-based application to Internet Web technology to reduce operational support and maintenance costs. The conversion to “eWiSACWIS” was completed in December 2003. Counties that went on the system in 2004 implemented the new Internet version.

With the statewide implementation completed, Wisconsin is beginning the process to obtain federal certification of the eWiSACWIS system as meeting all SACWIS requirements. The initial federal certification review took place in September 2004. Based on the experience of other states, obtaining final federal certification will likely be a multi-year process. DCFS is currently working with the ACF Systems Unit to finalize the report from the initial SACWIS review. Major issues that will require attention for

SACWIS certification are interfaces with other systems, IV-E eligibility and reducing duplication of data entry.

eWiSACWIS is designed to provide statewide data on child abuse and neglect investigations for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and statewide data on children in the out-of-home care and adoption programs for Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting purposes. During the transition period, as counties have come up on eWiSACWIS, state data have come from the combination of eWiSACWIS and legacy systems. The legacy systems include the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) data system for child abuse and neglect reports and the Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) for information on children in foster care, payments to foster care providers, and adoptions, and the Kinship Care Data Tracking System for information on children receiving Kinship care payments.

For NCANDS reporting, the CAN system is currently used to submit summary state data for the NCANDS Summary Data Component (SDC) format. eWiSACWIS data is currently loaded into the CAN system to produce the SDC report. Development has been completed in eWiSACWIS to create the Child File for submitting case-specific data along with the Agency file to provide additional NCANDS information. The CAN system was used to provide the SDC report for FFY 2004 while the new Child and Agency Files are being tested. Wisconsin will submit the NCANDS Child and Agency files instead of the SDC summary report beginning in FFY 2005, with the first Child and Agency files submitted in March 2006

For AFCARS Foster Care reporting, information is currently generated from eWiSACWIS using placement records for children in out-of-home care. During the period that eWiSACWIS was being rolled out statewide, Wisconsin submitted a “blended” foster care file using eWiSACWIS data for counties that implemented the system and legacy HSRS Child Substitute Care (CSC) module information for counties using the legacy system. As counties have implemented eWiSACWIS, the eWiSACWIS share of the blended AFCARS foster file has grown as use of the HSRS CSC module was phased out. The last blended file was the FFY 2004 A file covering October 2003 through March 2004. For blended files, random sequence numbers were used for the case records. The 2004 B file covering April 2004 through September 2004 was drawn 100% from eWiSACWIS and included the last group of counties that converted in June 2004. DCFS began use of encrypted case numbers in the FFY 2004 B file, which will improve federal capacity to match AFCARS files from different time periods.

For adoption AFCARS reporting, information is currently generated from eWiSACWIS using placement and adoption records for children who are adopted. Historically, the HSRS system Adoption Module was used to submit state adoption data. The eWiSACWIS AFCARS adoption file was completed in December 2004 and the first eWiSACWIS submission was the FFY 2005A file covering October 2004 through March 2005.

Under the Chafee Act, states are required to collect outcome information for youth who age out of the out-of-home care system. Wisconsin is waiting on federal direction on the specific outcome measures before building data collection mechanisms. It is anticipated that the Chafee outcome data collection will be implemented through enhancements to the eWiSACWIS system.

Under the CAPTA, states are to provide information to the extent possible on a number of data elements. The submission of the NCANDS Child and Agency files beginning with FFY 2005 will improve the ability of Wisconsin to provide data for CAPTA purposes.

#### B. Research and Evaluation

The DCFS publishes several types of child welfare statistical information. The DCFS publishes an annual report on child abuse and neglect (CAN) statistics for the state, including the number and type of maltreatment reports and the disposition of those reports. The DCFS produces periodic out-of-home care (OOHC) reports using out-of-home care information. The last OOHC report analyzing data through 1999 was published in October 2001. Additional OOHC reports will be produced once out-of-home care data for all counties can be obtained from eWiSACWIS.

The BMCW has a Program Evaluation and Management (PEM) unit that produces monthly data reports on child welfare services in Milwaukee. These monthly data reports are shared widely within the Milwaukee community. On a semi-annual basis, a comprehensive report on BMCW achievement of lawsuit settlement performance objectives is produced and shared with the Milwaukee community.

Within DCFS, the Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) leads efforts to develop data sources and analyze program outcomes to improve the quality of child welfare services in the state. The OPEP develops program outcome reports for counties using eWiSACWIS, CAN, HSRS, and other data patterned after the federal child welfare outcomes report. Additional reports for county use will be produced as part of the quality assurance initiative in the Wisconsin PEP.

The DCFS is currently contracting with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to conduct a third party evaluation of child welfare services provided by the BMCW in Milwaukee County. The evaluation includes both in-home and out-of-home care services. The project has produced reports on in-home safety services in 2003 and recent entries to out-of-home care in 2004. A third report on another group of children who have been in out-of-home care for an extended period is currently underway. The final evaluation report will be completed in 2005.

DCFS currently contracts with the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to participate in a 3-state study with Illinois and Iowa to evaluate Independent Living outcomes for youth who aged out of out-of-home care. Outcome areas that will be examined include employment, education, housing, and various lifestyle issues (parenting, substance abuse,

victimization, etc.). The study will also compile information regarding services and supports the youths received. Cases were selected for the evaluation starting in April 2002 and the first wave of interviews with youth were completed in 2003. An interim report on the first wave of interviews has been completed. The second wave of interviews with the sampled youth were completed in 2004. The final wave of interviews will be conducted prior to the youth turning 21. Wisconsin anticipates using the study results to meet expected federal Chafee program reporting requirements on a sample basis until more complete data collection mechanisms can be developed.

### C. Case Review System

Wisconsin has a comprehensive judicial and administrative panel review system in place to review the permanency plans for children in out-of-home care and to ensure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Most counties use administrative panels for the six month reviews and 12 months reviews are done by the court.

Key aspects of child welfare case planning and review include the following factors:

- Development and implementation of service and progress evaluation plans with families and key collateral contacts with the family system; and,
- Use of the case and permanency plans and results of subsequent progress evaluations as bases for conducting permanency plan reviews, assessing ASFA considerations and requirements, and modifying the permanence goal, as necessary, including the development of a concurrent permanence goal.

Practice responsibilities and relevant parties associated with the above factors are governed by a variety of policy directives, including state statutes, administrative rules, program policies (i.e., Numbered Memos), standards, guidelines, and operating procedures. Current state statutes governing child welfare and juvenile justice intervention address permanency plan review requirements, timeframes, plan content, and notice procedures, including notice to out-of-home care providers, and are consistent with expectations prescribed under ASFA.

The issuance of the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* in May 2002 provided a uniform system to assure that all county child welfare caseworkers conduct timely family assessments, develop case plans, and conduct case reviews for all children and families who enter the system. Coupled with the previously issued *CPS Investigation Standards*, the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* are designed to cover the life of a case from the time that a child abuse or neglect report is received through the closing of the ongoing services case.

The DCFS has implemented several approaches to informing, clarifying, and monitoring permanency planning review requirements and assessing ongoing ASFA compliance. These approaches include development or modification and implementation of standards and guidelines for practice and operating procedures, provision of training and technical assistance, and ongoing monitoring and program improvement responsibilities.

To further clarify ASFA requirements previously codified into Wisconsin statutes, DCFS proposed legislative changes in the 2003-04 legislative session. Unfortunately, the legislative session ended before the changes could be enacted. DCFS will again seek consideration of those changes in 2005-06 legislative session.

#### *Modification of Administrative Rules, Standards, Policies, and Operating Procedures*

The ability to comply with ASFA requirements not only requires tracking the length of a child's placement in out-of-home care, but also implementing practice standards and guidelines, policies, and procedures, and program coordination which support effective child welfare intervention. Such efforts focus on successfully engaging the child and his or her family, involving them in the development of a unique and responsive case plan, and evaluating progress in a thorough and regular manner, involving the family, providers, and key collateral contacts in this process.

Finally, DCFS continues to work with representatives of the Director of State Courts Office, the Milwaukee County Children's Court, and other key legal stakeholders in supporting continued cross-system coordination in the state's permanency planning review responsibilities and compliance with the ASFA. Efforts have focused on the identification and development of strategies to address the availability of resources within and philosophical differences among members of Wisconsin's county judiciary regarding the implementation of the ASFA requirements.

#### *CFSR Improvement Strategies*

The 2003 CFSR for Wisconsin found that six and 12 month reviews are conducted on a timely basis. The major issues identified in the CFSR include the participation of the family in the case review process, delays in the termination of parental rights (TPR), and participation of foster parents in review hearings.

Several action steps in the Program Enhancement Plan are designed to improve the case review process in these areas. Key action steps include Step D related to permanency planning, Step J relating to family involvement, Step K related to foster parent training, Step N relating to case planning, and Step O relating to the TPR process. In addition, in Governor Doyle's KidsFirst initiative, the Governor indicated support for pursuing legislation to improve the TPR process in Wisconsin.

DCFS is currently working with the Director of State Courts Office (DSCO) to include reviews of court case files by DSCO staff as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement reviews of county child welfare programs. The concurrent review of court files with the child welfare case reviews will allow DCFS and DSCO to provide feedback to both the courts and child welfare agency on how to improve the case review process.

## D. Quality Assurance

### *Quality Assurance Staffing*

Several program units throughout the DCFS and the DHFS carry out quality assurance efforts for the child welfare program in both the BMCW and in county agencies across the state. These program units include the following:

- *DCFS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit* – This unit formed in 2005 has responsibility for conducting child welfare case reviews in counties using a case review tool similar to the CFSR. The case review results are used for measuring improvement on CFSR item.
- *Department Area Administration Regional Staff* – These staff review local child welfare programs, including monitoring program performance, conducting on-site reviews, and responding to client and public complaints about local program services.
- *BMCW Program Evaluation Managers (PEMs)* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the BMCW child welfare program, including safety, case management, adoption, and licensing services. The staff monitor agency performance and conduct regular on-site reviews.
- *BPP Adoption Quality Assurance Specialists* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the Special Needs Adoption Program. The BPP is in the process of hiring staff to monitor agency performance and conduct on-site reviews.
- *BPP Child Welfare Policy Section* - These staff provide policy expertise for specific program reviews and program monitoring.
- *DCFS Office of Program Evaluation and Planning* - The office coordinates the use of program outcome data for program monitoring and contract management purposes.
- *OSF Program Evaluation and Audit Section* – These staff perform in-depth program and fiscal audits of agencies receiving funds from the Department. DCFS uses this unit as needed to ensure accountability of agencies for child welfare funds.

### *Continuous Quality Improvement Unit*

In response to the August 2003 Federal CFSR, the DCFS developed a program enhancement plan (PEP) that included the design and implementation of a comprehensive statewide Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system. The purpose of the CQI system is to identify strengths and problem areas and then provide needed technical assistance and support to enhance Wisconsin's child welfare program. Formation of the CQI unit in DCFS provided the resources to implement the CQI initiative.

The CQI initiative reflects the evaluative system Wisconsin chose to implement. Quality assurance is predominantly a system of the quantitative measurement of compliance oriented activities. Wisconsin has chosen to embrace an evaluative process, which focuses on outcomes, as measured by qualitative indicators.

In the summer of 2004 an RFP was released for the recruitment of 5 contracted CQI Specialists, to be hired through a contract agency. The contract was awarded to the Madison based organization “The Management Group” (TMG).

In November 2004 the state hired the Manager of its new CQI system to provide direction, oversight, analysis and program planning for the provision of statewide child welfare services and the child welfare CQI plan. This position currently supervises and coordinates the activities of the 5 contracted CQI Specialist positions, as well as the CQI Coordinator.

In January 2005, the paraprofessional CQI Coordinator was hired to coordinate county agency reviews logistics, manage quality enhancement data from case reviews, and assist in the production of review reports for county agencies.

After an extensive interviewing process, TMG hired 5 persons, from a pool of 50, as CQI Specialists. The Specialists began employment in February 2005 and have undergone a comprehensive review of Wisconsin’s case practice standards; Children’s Code (s.48); CFSR Program Enhancement Plan (PEP); training Partnership’s Core Courses; TMG evaluator skills training; CFSR case reviewer training; etc.

Limited Case Reviews were conducted in three counties in 2005 to cumulatively review about 30 cases, which will be added to the baseline data from the 50 cases reviewed in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR. The limited case reviews use the CFSR protocol with the CFSR case review instrument and peer reviewers, with the exception that stakeholder interviews are not conducted. In addition, a county case review was conducted using the Quality Service Review (QSR) protocol used by several states.

In June 2005, the CQI Committee received feedback from various counties, who have experienced case reviews via the CFSR and QSR protocols and identified the QSR protocol as the most appropriate method for the case review component of the CQI county reviews. The QSR tool will allow DCFS to provide more information to counties regarding the quality of their case practice.

The CQI county reviews will be conducted in concert with the Children’s Court Initiative, a QA project of the Director of State Courts Office. Both systems will conduct a simultaneous review of a county child welfare agency and court system and present their findings together.

The combined reviews will begin during the piloting phase of the CQI reviews in the fall of 2005. Two or three counties will undergo a pilot, prior to a full rollout of the CQI/CCI reviews beginning in November 2005.

### *Adoption Program Quality Assurance*

The quality assurance component of the Adoption Program includes four adoption QA specialists who support strategies to improve special needs adoption services and track adoption outcomes. The QA staff uses various methods, including an annual satisfaction survey and developing a quality assurance tool for monitoring adoption cases assigned to contract partner agencies to determine agency eligibility for a performance payment and to measure outcomes. The QA tool, along with personal and telephone interviews and surveys, is used for on-site reviews of cases.

The adoption QA staff also review cases for compliance with the Adoption Standards of Practice. Examples of activities that are analyzed include: methods of handling complaints by foster and adoptive parents; how case plans are developed to meet the permanence needs of the child; preparation of the child for adoption to successfully transition to adopted status; and training of prospective adoptive parents regarding issues with special needs children in order to ensure that parents are knowledgeable of issues affecting adoptive children, thereby reducing the likelihood of a failed adoption.

The QA staff do regular reports on the private agencies, develop the annual adoption report required by statute, provide quality oversight of the Adoption Program, provide or arrange for training, and follow up on eWiSACWIS data entry issues claiming clean-up, develop a monthly newsletter for all adoption staff to ensure continuity of adoption service throughout the state, and other tasks as assigned. In our next biennial budget, DCFS will make these positions permanent within the Adoption Program.

### *Ongoing Monitoring and Program Improvement*

The DCFS continues to implement ongoing efforts to assess the quality of child welfare services, to identify what is needed to support service quality, and to develop strategies to respond to those needs, including the requirements associated with permanency planning reviews and compliance with the ASFA.

As part of its ongoing quality assurance efforts, the DCFS has increased its efforts to support and utilize the information available from its data sources and developed new data collection tools to better understand the status of child welfare service delivery across the state. As a result of data collection, analysis, and reporting for the BMCW, DCFS has achieved increased capacity to use data for program monitoring. This capacity is increasing through the statewide implementation of the eWiSACWIS. County agencies are provided with reports on program activity and will be provided with additional reports once all counties have converted to eWiSACWIS.

## E. Training and Technical Assistance

### *Staff Training*

Training is provided to local agency staff primarily through Training Partnerships formed by state, county and tribal agencies with several campuses of the University of Wisconsin system. The state is divided into five training partnerships: the Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Partnership with the UW-Green Bay; the Western Partnership with UW-River Falls; the Southern Partnership with the UW- Madison; the Milwaukee Partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Inter-tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership with UW-Green Bay. DCFS works with the Training Partnerships to provide a statewide system of training for child welfare workers on the foundations of practice and advanced skills training on specialized topics. All counties, BMCW, SNAP, and most tribes are members of the Training Partnerships.

Training activities are coordinated using a State Training Council that reviews training activities and provides direction to the Training Partnerships. The Training Partnerships have local steering committees with representation from county and tribal child welfare agencies. The Training Partnerships work closely with child welfare managers to encourage counties to have more staff complete the core training. In 2002, the Training Council developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the training system that is being used to guide further development of the Training Partnership system.

The Training Partnerships are involved in supporting counties to provide training to foster parents and prospective adoptive parents using a state-approved competency based curriculum. Foster and adoptive parent training is discussed in detail under the foster and adoptive parent recruitment section of the plan.

### *Training Curriculum*

The Wisconsin training curriculum for child welfare staff is a competency-based approach designed to reinforce the basic principles of good case practice and to develop specialized knowledge and skills. A foundation of “Core” courses is offered statewide and all caseworkers are expected to complete the Core. Regular offerings of “specialized” training on advanced practice skills and “related” training on topics important to casework provide opportunities for ongoing training. DCFS is presently working with the Training Partnerships, counties, and tribes to develop a standardized comprehensive pre-service training curriculum.

DCFS and the Training Partnerships continue to update the standard training curricula to better educate child welfare staff regarding state and federal program requirements and child welfare practice to instill the competencies needed by staff to support child safety, permanence, and well being. Specialized training on new program initiatives is provided through the Training Partnerships to the extent possible and all training activities are coordinated with the Training Partnerships.

In Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Training Partnership also operates the staff development program under contract, providing training to BMCW staff on program requirements and BMCW operating procedures.

#### *Foster Care Provider Training*

The training program for foster and adoptive parents is described under Section IV of the plan on page XX. DCFS is committed to the expansion of pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. A foster parent training subcommittee of the state child welfare training council has been developed to make recommendations on the implementation of pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. This group works collaboratively with the foster and adoptive parent resource center to provide statewide support for training efforts.

DCFS contracts with the University of Milwaukee Youth Work Learning Center to provide training to staff caring for children in group homes and residential care centers. For treatment foster care, DCFS administrative rule requires that the treatment foster care agencies provide training to treatment foster parents.

#### *Other Training and Technical Assistance*

DCFS supports academic degree programs using Title IV-E funds on a pass-through basis. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Green Bay (jointly with UW-Oshkosh) operate Masters of Social Work (MSW) student stipend programs. UW-Green Bay also has a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) stipend program.

In 2004, DCFS worked collaboratively with the child welfare training council to begin the Inter-tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership. This new training partnership is administered through UW-Green Bay and will provide training and technical assistance to tribal child welfare staff to address specific needs related to tribal child welfare programs. DCFS is committed to supporting the continued development of the Inter-tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership and provides funding for the tribal training manager, at UW-Green Bay.

The Division conducts other types of technical assistance and program education activities, including hosting an annual child welfare conference for local agency administrators and managers and periodic program roundtable meetings on child welfare program topics. Through the regional offices, the Department provides ongoing technical assistance to counties and tribes regarding child welfare program knowledge, skills, and program requirements.

#### *IV-E Funding for Training*

DCFS provides financial support to the Training Partnerships primarily by passing through Title IV-E training funds based on match generated by the universities and the member agencies. The member county and tribal agencies provide cash contributions to

the Training Partnerships. DCFS works with the universities to define procedures for counting member agency expenses as match. DCFS has also established detailed fiscal reporting to ensure documentation of match expenses.

Specific training projects are also funded by DCFS using other federal funding sources such as Title IV-B and CAPTA. The Training Partnerships receive CAPTA funds for training related to child protective service assessments and the Training Partnerships also use university resources and member agency contributions to support training that is not IV-E reimbursable.

DCFS has issued a comprehensive IV-E training fiscal guide based on federal law, regulations, and audit findings to provide guidance to all grantees receiving IV-E funds. The fiscal guide describes in detail the types of expenses eligible for IV-E reimbursement at the enhanced training rate and the obligations of universities receiving IV-E funds.

### *Enhancing Training*

In the Wisconsin CFSR results, initial staff training, ongoing staff training, and foster/adoptive parent training were cited as areas needing improvement. DCFS remains committed to establishing statewide requirements for initial and ongoing staff training. DCFS has provided funding for the development of a state child welfare training coordinator to help develop and implement training requirements; a state curriculum coordinator to ensure the efficient development of the identified training recommended in the PEP and a distance learning contract to help develop and implement alternative delivery modalities in training.

An ad hoc committee on training requirements has been working to develop recommendations on pre service and ongoing training requirements in child welfare. Additional funds have been provided to the Training Partnerships to establish a statewide program of pre-service training for child welfare staff and to expand ongoing training to ensure that all staff receive foundation or Core training and ongoing training.

DCFS will also establish a WiSACWIS training program that will provide ongoing systems training to county, BMCW, and, potentially, tribal users of the system. The WiSACWIS training will be coordinated with the practice and specialized training sessions delivered by the Training Partnerships. In addition, DCFS is establishing a statewide foster care resource center that will provide statewide coordination of foster and adoptive parent training.

## F. Service Array

The availability, applicability, and accessibility of key service interventions are critical to helping families maintain or achieve safe home environments and to assure timely permanence for children who require temporary or permanent placement outside of their homes. As part of Wisconsin's child welfare program, county agencies, tribes, and the BMCW assure the availability of services through a variety of sources.

On behalf of the BMCW, the vendor agencies provide in-home safety services to families and ongoing case management services to families with children placed in out-of-home care. The vendor agencies create specialized service networks with community service providers, through either subcontract, memoranda of understanding, or information and referral. These service networks include specific resources designed to meet the individualized needs of families based on the families' current case plan or progress evaluation. The BMCW has specified a standard list of services that must be available to all families based on their service needs.

Similarly, in the balance of the state, county and tribal agencies receive funds from the Department to support the delivery of prevention, early intervention, and ongoing assistance needed to assure child safety and permanence. Funds directed toward these services are provided through the Community Aids and Youth Aids programs, PSSF program, IV-E Incentive Funds program, and other state and local funding mechanisms. These services are available statewide, although counties have developed individualized service strategies based on the needs of their population and the availability of service providers. The DCFS gives counties and tribes considerable flexibility with local service strategies.

The DCFS uses a program planning process that requires local agencies to solicit community and program participant input into establishing service priorities and service strategies. Through local PSSF program planning committees, Citizen Review Panels, or other coordination mechanisms local agencies have established collaborative structures to obtain input into local program planning.

In conjunction with the Division of Disability and Elder Services (DDES), the DCFS has developed the Coordinated Services Team Initiative. Based on fundamental core values and a strength-based approach to service provision, child welfare, substance abuse, and mental health agencies work together across systems in an effort to provide comprehensive services and supports to children and families. This initiative is aimed at systems change; therefore, it is a time-limited infusion of resources designed to assist counties in changing their service delivery systems. The two Divisions provide technical assistance and funding to counties in an effort to enhance collaboration, advocacy, and case planning with families involved in multiple systems. Currently, eighteen (18) counties utilize the CST approach while another sixteen (16) counties have Integrated Services Programs (ISP).

As a part of Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), DCFS will work with key child welfare stakeholders to evaluate the availability and accessibility of services to children and their caregivers in order to respond effectively to the safety and permanency needs of children. DCFS will collaborate with county and tribal staff, as well as service providers, to develop strategies to target state resources to meet the service needs of children and families involved with the child welfare system.

The DCFS issued the *Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines For Child Protective Services* in May 2002 and is developing an administrative rule related to reasonable efforts and permanency planning (Ch. HFS 44) to provide direction to local agencies in the developing service plans and performing ongoing case management. These standards and guidelines focus on identifying services in case and permanency plans that meet the unique needs of the particular family involved.

As part of PEP Action Step T, DCFS will conduct a statewide service survey to identify gaps in services and barriers to utilizing services. Using the survey information, DCFS will work with counties to address gaps and barriers.

#### G. Agency Responsiveness to Community

The DCFS engages in ongoing consultation with local agencies, tribes, and key representatives of agencies or service systems that interface with the child welfare system. Ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among the state child welfare program, its funding sources, and its key stakeholders (e.g., foster and adoptive parents, tribes, court systems, service providers, and consumers) are critical to protecting the safety of children, achieving permanency, and promoting the well-being of families. The DCFS continues to work with key stakeholder groups to improve communication and coordination. The input of stakeholders is actively sought by the DCFS and the input is used in the DCFS strategic planning process.

The DCFS regularly works with groups representing key constituencies in the child welfare system to identify and resolve issues. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Wisconsin Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, the Wisconsin County Human Services Association, the 11 Indian Tribes in Wisconsin, the Office of the Director of State Courts, elected officials at the state and local levels, and other associations.

DCFS staff regularly meet with local agencies and service providers to discuss child welfare issues and identify ways to improve services and state-level support of the service delivery system. State staff participate in regional meetings of local child welfare and juvenile justice program managers.

In Milwaukee, a Partnership Council consisting of representatives from state and local government, the courts, service providers, and other key stakeholders meets regularly to discuss Milwaukee child welfare program issues. The BMCW provides the Partnership Council with regular reports on program activity in Milwaukee.

The state-level PEP Implementation Team consists of over 80 members representing counties, tribes, courts, advocates and many other agencies or groups with an interest in the child welfare program. The PEP Implementation team meets quarterly to provide direction on implementation of the PEP and other child welfare issues. The PEP Implementation team replaced the Child Welfare Executive Steering Committee (ESC) that met on a quarterly basis since May of 2001 to consider the results of the local assessment process and advise the DCFS on how to improve child welfare program performance.

The PEP Implementation Team and the predecessor ESC sustain the child welfare planning partnership with counties, tribes, courts, and other stakeholders through the implementation of the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan, the five-year Children and Family Services Plan, and other program planning efforts. The PEP Implementation Team structure with related committees provides a broad opportunity for counties, tribes, other state agencies, consumers, advocacy organizations, and other child welfare professionals who will work together to help ensure that the needed actions and strategies to improve the child welfare outcomes are implemented.

The PEP Implementation Team will:

- Guide the implementation of the plans.
- Ensure the input of staff, peers, consumers, community leaders, and others in the implementation process.
- Provide expertise and advice on resolution of competing issues and other problems as they arise.
- Strengthen and advance the interdisciplinary response to improving the safety, permanence, and well being of children.

The related PEP committees on out-of-home care, child welfare case process, adoption and quality improvement will address details of PEP implementation and will be composed of professionals in child protection, mental health, domestic violence, foster parenting, adoption, health care, law enforcement, the courts, alcohol and drug abuse, and other related fields. The committees will actively involve consumers and other stakeholders in shaping the policies, procedures, practices, and services that comprise the PEP, CFSP, and the Wisconsin five-year plan. The committees will also make recommendations to DCFS and consult with the full PEP Implementation Team as issues arise that would be best shaped by a larger discussion.

The DCFS continues to support coordination between local child welfare agencies and local PSSF program planning committees. Collaborative efforts have included joint training, involvement in local assessments, and implementation of a combined, multi-year planning process.

## H. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts

The availability and quality of licensed out-of-home care placement providers in Wisconsin is supported by a variety of laws, administrative rules, and policies. Regulatory policies are developed by the Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) and the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL), with the BPP developing standards for licensing foster homes and treatment foster homes and the BRL developing and enforcing standards for group homes, private child placing agencies, shelter care facilities, and residential care centers for children and youth. In 2004, DCFS began providing regular training for foster home licensors on licensing requirements. This training includes an overview of existing requirements, recent changes or new Division policies, and discussion with colleagues about case scenarios.

The regulatory aspects of ensuring the safety of children and the quality of providers are driven by state statute and administrative rules as follows:

- Wisconsin's Children's Code, Chapter 48
  1. Placement Authorization
  2. Criminal Background Check Requirements
  3. Independent Investigations of Maltreatment Allegations Against Licensed Providers
  4. Notice to Foster Parents and Other Physical Custodians of Legal Proceedings
- Administrative Rules for Health and Family Services (HFS)
  1. HFS 12 - Caregiver Background Checks
  2. HFS 37 - Information To Be Provided to Foster Parents
  3. HFS 38 - Treatment Foster Care for Children
  4. HFS 50 – Facilitating the Adoption of Children with Special Needs
  5. HFS 51 – Adoption of Children with Special Needs
  6. HFS 52 - Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth
  7. HFS 54 - Child Placing Agencies
  8. HFS 56 - Foster Home Care for Children
  9. HFS 57 - Group Foster Care for Children
  10. HFS 58 – Eligibility for the Kinship Care and Long-Term Kinship Care Program
  11. HFS 59 – Shelter Care Facilities
  12. HFS 94 – Patient Rights and Resolution of Patient Grievances

The BMCW, state Adoption Program, county and tribal human/social services agencies, and private child welfare agencies work together to ensure the availability of and access to foster and adoptive placement resources. State, local, and private agencies also plan joint recruitment efforts, such as the Southern Regional Foster Care and Adoption fair, to increase awareness of foster care and adoption, encourage family-building through the foster care and adoption systems, and increase placement resources for both programs.

The DCFS continues to support comprehensive statewide recruitment efforts to attract more individuals to be foster or adoptive parents and has an annual recruitment budget. The DCFS recruitment plan assures that the concepts of foster care and adoption are made more visible within all of the communities in the state. The DCFS continued to operate a toll-free telephone line for interested individuals to call to request further information. Every call received is referred to the appropriate county child welfare agency for follow-up with the caller.

Special recruitment tools have been developed for use by the state Adoption Program and county foster care coordinators to train, recruit, and retain foster and adoptive families. In Wisconsin, over 85% of the special needs adoptions are foster home conversions. Because of this high percentage, the DCFS has committed to working with counties to recruit quality foster/adoptive resources. While funds for recruitment are limited, the DCFS has found that more can be accomplished by coordinating and pooling recruitment efforts with counties to best accomplish our mutual needs. In 2004, the state adoption program developed a standardized power point presentation for adoption orientation meetings for use in all of the regions of the state. The DCFS has been successful, through our private partners in the Adoption Program, to access their private resources to further expand the pool of foster/adoptive resources.

In various meetings and feedback sessions, foster and adoptive families reported that they stay involved in the program if they feel supported; to feel supported, they must feel listened to, be considered as team members, and receive training opportunities. In CY 2002, the DCFS partnered with the Western Wisconsin UW Training Partnership and counties for implementation of the Partners in Alternative Care Education, or P.A.C.E., pre-service training for foster/adopt families. This training has been very positively received by foster and adoptive families. Currently, over 34 counties have applied for state pass-through funding to support pre-service training.

In addition, the DCFS has been working with AdoptUSKids to increase recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families. In response to the upcoming public service advertisements from AdoptUSKids, the DCFS, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, and counties across the state are planning ways to respond quickly and effectively to inquiries from people who are interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents. In this process, counties and adoption agencies are identifying resource families to function as mentor families and provide prospective foster or adoptive parents with information about their experiences in foster care and adoption.

In 2004, representatives from foster care and adoption, including foster and adoptive parents, gathered for six days of consultation with Judy and John McKenzie from AdoptUSKids to work on a benchmarking initiative to increase recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families in Wisconsin to care for sibling groups. State level staff and regional groups that included foster care coordinators, contract partner adoption agencies, and tribal representatives identified areas in their agencies they could focus on to increase resources for siblings.

### *Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center*

The DCFS focused much effort over the past year on the creation of a Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to support foster and adoptive families and foster care coordinators. In mid-May 2004, foster parents, adoptive parents, foster care coordinators, adoption staff, tribal representatives, and state staff gathered to discuss and identify services that would support all members of the foster care and adoption systems. As a result of the planning in 2004, a consortium of three agencies, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, PATH Wisconsin Inc, and St. Aemilian-Lakeside, Inc. were awarded a contract to develop and operate the Resource Center. Part of their efforts will focus on providing specialized technical assistance to local agencies for the development of localized recruitment and retention efforts.

The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center began operations in 2005. As of July 2005, all of the Resource Center staff have been hired and are working in their respective offices. The staff of the Resource Center held open house events at Adoption Resources of Wisconsin offices in May, at St. Aemilian-Lakeside offices in Sheboygan in June, and at PATH, Wisconsin, Inc. offices in July. Resource Center staff have been meeting with key stakeholders, including the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, foster care coordinators groups statewide, and other groups to discuss their priorities for the Resource Center and disseminate information about the Resource Center activities. The Resource Center, based upon a request from the statewide foster care coordinators association, is developing a template newsletter for foster parents and agency staff with statewide information and space for local information and updates. The Resource Center has also developed its web site and is continually gathering and adding information.

Information about the scope and services of the Resource Center is available on their web site at:

<http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org>

## **X. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN FOR FFY 2006**

### **Overview**

The Department will continue to develop and implement program standards for safety, permanence, and well being of children and the overall improvement of the child welfare system. The standards implement provisions under federal law, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and improvement strategies included in the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP).

The following section of the plan describes specific activities planned for Title IV-B, Adoption, CAPTA, Chafee, and Tribal Child Welfare during the period of 2005 - 2009. Activities implemented in the next year will be done with FFY 2006 funds. Proposed budgets for FFY 2006 are attached to the plan.

### **Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services**

#### *Community Aids Program*

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Community Aids Program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipated in program policy for how Community Aids funds can be used for child welfare services. The Department has established a workgroup, including DCFS and counties, that is evaluating options to revise the funding structure for human services, including child welfare. If any changes in the human services funding structure result from this process, such changes would be implemented later than FFY 2006.

#### *Youth Aids Program*

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Youth Aids program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipated in program policy for how Youth Aids funds can be used for juvenile justice services.

#### *Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Programs*

DCFS will work with the Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services (WAHRS) to develop guidelines to assist programs in developing good working relationships with their individual county and law enforcement agencies, and develop policies regarding issues of confidentiality, mutual delivery of service, and information sharing with their local county human service departments. Runaway programs will continue to develop an array of services to strengthen families and improve their ability to parent and provide a safe environment for their children. These services will include crisis counseling, family mediation, family counseling, and parenting classes. These

services will support families that currently are not in contact with child protective services, and strengthen families that may be at-risk of intervention by CPS.

**Planned Activities:** Over the next 5 years, Runaway Programs will continue to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent and stable homes for youth.

- Provide over 2,000 families with counseling annually
- Annually serve over 3,300 youth face-to-face
- Provide temporary shelter for approximately 3,600 youth annually
- Provide crisis counseling to over 15,000 youth annually

Over 95% of youth served by the Runaway Program will be reunited with their families or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

A FFY 2006 budget request for IV-B Subpart 1 funds is included in the plan. The FFY 2006 plan assumes continuation of the FFY 2005 funding level.

## **CFSP for FFY 2006**

### **IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

#### *Local PSSF Program Operations*

The DCFS has refined the plan format used by counties to develop their three-year plans. In developing plans, counties will utilize both individual and community outcomes. It is expected that counties will use the results to make important programming decisions. The new format will include federal outcomes used for the CFSR process and data will be provided by DCFS for each county. Individual programs will be required to identify individual outcomes and counties will submit reports which include those results. The new format will focus on ease of use and the ability to better utilize outcome results to determine efficacy of programs. This format was used for counties to write their 2005-2007 PSSF plans.

The Wisconsin federal Subpart II grant award for FFY 2004 was larger than expected due to the discretionary appropriation at the federal level and increased Food Stamp utilization in the state for children, which is used to determine state allocations. For the portion of the additional funds related to Family Support, Preservation, and Reunification, DCFS will allocate additional funds to counties. DCFS is using a new allocation formula that provides for greater equity and, in particular, provides much needed additional funds to smaller, rural counties. As part of the local 2005-2007 plans, DCFS will require counties to use the new PSSF monies to program enhancements identified in the Wisconsin PEP.

#### *Other Program Initiatives*

DCFS will continue to promote and support collaborative efforts such as the Coordinated Service Teams. While supporting efforts that deal with short-term crisis issues for at-risk families, it is vital that chronic, long-term issues impairing efforts to become strong and healthy families are also addressed. In addition, a new pilot program involving the collaboration of BPP, other Divisions within the Department, and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections is being developed to provide case management and wrap-around services in order to safely reunite female offenders with their children. Goals of the program are closely tied to objectives identified in Wisconsin's PEP, and will include service components that address issues important to successful reunification such as: permanency, access to physical and emotional healthcare, AODA resources, on-going family assessment, safety planning, collaboration/advocacy with the child's educational system, etc. All services are being designed for accessibility to both parents and children.

DCFS will further fatherhood initiatives by working with counties to identify and remove policies and practices that may be barriers to fathers and other non-custodial parents participating in child welfare cases and create services/programs that are father-friendly. In addition, in response to one of the strategies identified in Wisconsin's PEP, PSSF funds will be used to assist in enhancing Wisconsin's efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the child welfare system.

DCFS will continue to work with counties and tribes to strengthen collaborative efforts at the local level to improve and enhance services to children and families. In response to one of the items in Wisconsin's PEP, we will be using some of Wisconsin's PSSF funding to add a Tribal Services Training Coordinator. This will be a contracted position that will assess the need for training and technical assistance among county and tribal workers in the areas of Indian Tribal Welfare, cultural issues, and federal and state requirements.

DCFS will work with local PSSF lead agencies to identify the level of current programs and services designed to improve relationship skills/strengthen marriages.

Continuing a change made in FFY 2005, PSSF funds will be used for technical assistance to agencies operating Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) programs that provide training to paraprofessionals to be "home visitors" and provide parenting training/education of new parents. This is a prevention program intended to reduce child abuse and neglect. A recent evaluation of the POCAN program by the Department has shown it to be effective.

In addition, PSSF funds will be used for PEPP implementation activities and other special projects related to family support, preservation, reunification and adoption.

#### ***Use of Subpart 2 Funds for PSSF Services***

Of the total Subpart 2 funds, 20% is used by the DCFS for state-level adoption promotion and support services activities. A small amount, approximately 5%, is used by DCFS for state operations, including training and technical assistance to counties and tribes. Slightly more than 5% will be used to fund three statewide programs. The remaining 70% of the Subpart 2 funds are allocated to counties and tribes to fund support, preservation, and reunification programs and for three statewide service enhancement programs. Local agencies are required to apply the federal funding requirements for family support, preservation, and reunification services to meet the Subpart 2 spending requirements for those service areas

For the adoption promotion and support services portion of the Subpart 2 program, the PSSF funds are directed toward promoting and supporting adoption as a permanency outcome for children. For information about the adoption portion of PSSF funds, please see the adoption section of this plan.

A FFY 2006 budget request for IV-B Subpart 2 funds is included in the plan. The FFY 2006 plan assumes continuation of the FFY 2005 funding level.

#### ***State Matching Funds for Subpart 2***

The PSSF funds for all categories, except adoption, are allocated to counties on a calendar year basis and tribes on a federal fiscal year basis. Under state policy for the PSSF program, local agencies are required to spend the required minimum amounts for

preservation, support, and reunification. Local agencies are also required to use the other services amount on preservation, support, or reunification activities. Wisconsin does not currently operate any projects in the “other” services category. The DCFS uses the adoption amount at the state level as part of the overall financing for adoption program activities.

The required state match for the PSSF program is generated by county agencies using state funds provided through the Community Aids program or local tax levy funds. The estimated match amounts are based on local agency expenditure information reported to the DCFS. The estimated match amounts shown in the CFS-101 form attached to the plan reflect the estimated minimum match expenditures for each of the PSSF categories. Actual match expenditures will typically exceed the minimum amounts, particularly for family preservation activities.

## **CFSP for 2006 Adoption Program**

Increasing the total numbers of special needs adoptions, adoptions of children over the age of nine, and increasing the timeliness of adoption finalizations will continue to be priorities for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Over the past 5 years, Wisconsin has seen the number of finalized special needs adoptions double with large numbers of children over age nine. Increasing the timeliness of adoptions has been difficult, but implementation of the Action Steps in the PEP will improve the timeliness of adoption finalization.

DCFS will focus more attention on assigning potential adoptive cases earlier in the out-of-home experience so that more children can move to permanence within the federal adoption performance standard of 24 months and the state can make progress toward the national standard of 32%. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving the timeliness of foster home conversions. The Adoption Program will concentrate on assigning cases earlier so that children can get to permanence sooner.

To help in this process, DCFS developed a Permanency Consultation Timeline to aid counties and the state permanency consultant's plan for child permanence without unnecessary delays or barriers. Staff from counties, the state, and private agencies were involved in developing this timeline, which was then updated with recommendations from the CFSR program enhancement planning process to reflect best practice.

The State Permanency Consultant (SPC) role is also in the process of implementation with the remaining state adoption workers. This position requires working with counties, tribes, and private agencies to identify the most appropriate form of permanence for all children in out-of-home care. The SPC is an active participant in this process and assists the county, tribe, or private agency in ensuring that the necessary steps to achieve permanence are taken. In some cases, this may require the SPC to assist in carrying out some of the tasks.

The CFSR created an excellent opportunity for Wisconsin to look at the services the Adoption Program currently offers with an eye on those services that families have identified that they need. DCFS is taking advantage of this opportunity to expand services to foster and adoptive families as identified in the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP). The challenge for Wisconsin will be to support these services when our adoption incentive funds disappear due to our inability to increase the number of adoptions.

### ***Planned activities for 2005 - 2009***

- Development of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center.
- Completion of the survey of families that have received post-adoption services to determine ways to better meet the needs of foster and adoptive families.
- Develop a comprehensive and sustained recruitment campaign that interfaces with the AdoptUSKids recruitment campaign.

- Partner with counties and tribes to more diligently search out paternal relatives and relatives in general for children in out-of-home care.
- Fully implement the Permanency Consultation timeline (attachment).
- Finalize changes in the state adoption caseworkers' role to that of State Permanency Consultant.
- Further develop the Adoption Quality Assurance role to address quality improvement in all adoption service areas.
- Decrease the time from removal to permanence for children in out-of-home care.
- Make the four Adoption Quality Assurance staff positions permanent.

#### *IV-B Part II Funds*

The IV-B part 2 funds received by the Adoption Program are used to support the post-adoption resource centers (PARCs) and the private adoption contracts. There are currently 6 PARCs in operation providing information and referral services to all adoptive families, including domestic and international adoptions. The adoption contracts have made it possible to achieve the high level of quality adoptions in the state and change the focus of the state adoption caseworker to that of state permanency consultant.

The adoption program portion of IV-B Subpart II funding for FFY 2006 is included in the IV-B Subpart II budget attached to this plan.

#### *International Adoptions*

In Wisconsin, DCFS has seen an increase in the number of disrupted international adoptions. Families are going to agencies outside Wisconsin to obtain placements of international children. Many of these agencies do not supply the family with complete information, convince families to take more children than they are approved to take, and do not provide post-placement services to help the child and family make the necessary adjustment.

The adoptive families are not familiar with the issues they will encounter and have no support from a licensed agency in some of these cases. It is currently up to the family to enter into another contract with a private agency for these services. Unfortunately, the family does not realize the need for these services and where to find the services, and by the time the family gets help, the relationship is so strained that the family decides to dissolve the relationship.

Currently, DCFS does not have the type of data necessary to make programmatic recommendations of how to minimize disruptions and dissolutions of adoptions. Work is being completed to DCFS will develop a database of information to assist in planning. New forms have been developed to help track disruptions and dissolutions. The SPC staff will discuss these cases on a monthly basis with county staff to allow DCFS to report more complete information concerning these children and families.

The necessary information will be gathered by the State Permanency Consultants (SPC) and analyzed by the QA staff. With the SPCs in the counties on a regular basis, DCFS will be able to get more accurate and timely information. The SPCs will carry a laptop computer with tracking forms so that information can be readily documented and shared.

#### *Use of Adoption Incentive Funds*

Except for one year, DCFS have received adoption incentive funds. Funds received have all been used to support the state adoption program's recruitment and finalization efforts as well as the adoption contract needs in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

To the extent that additional adoption incentive funds are received, DCFS will focus the use of its incentive funds on initiatives that are designed to improve stability of placements and promote timely permanence for children. Listed below are examples of initiatives that center on the following objectives:

- Enhance support for foster/adoptive parents by increasing training, development and consultation, providing services such as respite and post adoption to enable them to deal with crises or attend training.
- Increase availability of and access to specialized treatment and therapeutic services to adoptive/foster families and children especially when MA or the county does not cover the services.
- Increase use of relatives as placement resources by paying for searches and other mechanisms to locate relatives of children in out-of-home care.
- Provide training and support to birthparents whose parental rights have been terminated or who are going through the TPR process to help them have closure or focus on the best interest of their children.

These services would be provided to support families during pre- and post-adoption finalization. They would also be available for domestic, special needs, and international adoptive families.

#### *Post-Adoption Services*

In recent years, more families have expressed their concerns to DCFS about lack of support once the adoption is finalized. This same concern surfaced when families and professionals were interviewed during the CFSR.

DCFS plans to continue its planning partnership with families, counties, tribes and other stakeholders in identifying specific initiatives that will have the most impact on program outcomes. The ability to continue those initiatives of past two years if DCFS is unable to receive additional incentive funds will be a significant challenge.

Through a four-year ACF grant to Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, DCFS is examining post-adoption services in Wisconsin from the perspective of the families and children. The information DCFS receives will be extremely helpful in determining the

most appropriate and effective array of post-adoption services. DCFS will use this information to enhance the services it offers through the post-adoption resource centers (PARCs) and develop a Foster Care Resource Center that will be available to all families with children in out-of-home care or that have adopted.

#### *Wisconsin Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center*

Wisconsin has a pressing need for a steady and stable resource of quality foster families for children, but currently has very limited resources dedicated to supporting and sustaining foster parents, adoptive parents, and county foster care coordinators. Creation of the Wisconsin Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center will:

- a) Help caseworkers recruit and match foster/adoptive parents for children whose homes are no longer safe.
- b) Recognize the challenges of foster parenting and adoption and support parents in an effective way.
- c) Increase the visibility of foster care and adoption as options for families.
- d) Leverage public dollars with private support.

The Resource Center will support the work of child welfare professionals across the state. Caseworkers and foster care coordinators will have access to training and support for their foster care recruitment and retention efforts where very little is currently available. For more effective and efficient foster and adoptive family recruitment, the Resource Center will develop successful, low-cost recruitment strategies that can be adapted to most communities. It will offer forums for foster care coordinators to communicate and exchange ideas with colleagues across the state and will offer techniques and training to improve success in working with and retaining quality foster and adoptive families.

The Resource Center will also provide necessary and useful information to prospective foster and adoptive parents including tools to prepare them for life as a foster or adoptive family and for nurturing children who have experienced abuse or neglect or other issues that prevent these children from living at home. It will connect foster and adoptive parents to support networks and resources for children.

#### *Cross-Jurisdictional Resources*

DCFS currently works with counties, tribes, and private agencies to remove jurisdictional barriers to the placement of children. Adoption program planning is done jointly and is focused on how the program partners collectively can make the best placement decision for children in out-of-home care despite which agency may have developed the best possible resource.

Some specific strategies include:

- Work closely with the AdoptUSkids national recruitment campaign;
- Develop a state recruitment campaign to coincide with national campaigns;
- Work with AdoptUSkids as a pilot state to develop Indian family resources;

- Make the current State of Wisconsin post-adoption resource center (PARC) services available to all adoptive and foster care families;
- Using the permanency consultation timeline and role of the State Permanency Consultant, identify the most appropriate permanence option for children in OHC early;
- Promote cross-jurisdictional sharing of resources;
- Combine the foster family and adoptive family assessments into one format to be used for both purposes; and
- Train state, county, tribal, and private agency staff on MEPA and ICWA issues to remove barriers.

All of these efforts are focused on ensuring that children in need of permanence are placed with the resource that can best meet their needs as early in the out-of-home care process as possible. This will greatly reduce multiple placements and the trauma that children experience from multiple placements.

## **CFSP for FFY 2006**

### **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan (CAPTA)**

The Child and Family Services Review conducted in August of 2003 identified a number of child maltreatment issues as needing improvement. The major issues have been incorporated into the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) and several p of the PEP activities will be funded, at least in part, under the CAPTA grant.

The first two years of the CAPTA 5-Year Plan consist entirely of activities in the PEP related to one or more of the 14 areas delineated in CAPTA and to efforts to strengthen our compliance with CAPTA requirements added with the 2003 reauthorization. The subsequent three years of the 5-Year Plan will focus on other initiatives that are expected to grow out of the PEP activities.

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The areas of concentration for CAPTA program improvement include:

- A. Safety assessment and planning
- B. Family assessment and case planning
- C. CPS/law enforcement coordination
- D. CPS/DV project
- E. Training for guardians ad litem
- F. Child abuse and neglect prevention
- G. Improving the leadership skills of public child welfare managers
- H. Training for CPS caseworkers and CPS supervisors
- I. Coordinated/integrated service teams in CPS cases
- J. Purpose of the substantiation decision
- K. Citizen Review Panels

In order to support the effectiveness of the program, CAPTA funds will be used to provide ongoing training and technical assistance for those involved in providing services for the local programs. The FFY 2006 CAPTA budget is based on the FFY 2005 award and is included in this plan.

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#### **A. Scope of CPS Intervention**

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Define the scope of cases requiring CPS intervention.

This initiative resulted from observations from both the PEP Core Team and technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM). In part due to Wisconsin having a county-administered system with a strong tradition of independence, there is significant variation in the following decisions: screening (whether to respond to a report or to close it without contact), urgency (how quickly to respond), and the use and character of a non-CPS response to reports (e.g. “child welfare checks”). These are all decisions generally associated with the intake function.

Policy guidance for the intake function has not been revised since 1994 and does not address the critical issues of screening criteria or urgency criteria or the legal issues surrounding a decision to visit a family when the concerns in a report are not consistent with child maltreatment or the likelihood of child maltreatment occurring. County agencies have been requesting guidelines for screening and for urgency and want greater consistency statewide in these decisions. As more and more counties have implemented eWiSACWIS and consequently the Wisconsin Model of practice operationalized in eWiSACWIS, the interest in defining the agency role in non-CPS cases has also risen.

Every decision in the CPS case process is dependent on a clear understanding of who the CPS system is designed to serve. Screening and urgency criteria must reflect and support this understanding. Criteria for information gathering and analysis at initial assessment, which cases are opened for ongoing services, and when cases can be closed are all dependent upon a clear understanding of whom the CPS system serves.

A workgroup consisting of staff from the Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP), county agencies, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships, convened and supported with technical assistance from the NRCCM, has been established and begun work. The group will analyze current decision making about what types of cases counties throughout the state serve and develop policy in, at a minimum, the following areas: definition of who the CPS system seeks to serve, screening criteria, agency response to non-CPS issues, and criteria for response time.

Other issues that need clarity are: 1) how to handle multiple reports of the same incident or episode of alleged maltreatment and multiple findings within the same episode; and 2) when to name a particular person as a maltreater. Multiple reports and findings have resulted in confusion for staff as to how they should be documented, resulting at times in inaccurate data or an inaccurate perception of recurrence of maltreatment. Lack of clear policy on who may be named as a maltreater has resulted in young children being named when in other systems they cannot be held responsible for their actions because of age. It has also created problems for law enforcement investigations. The naming of a maltreater begins at intake, with the naming of an alleged maltreater. Either the workgroup already in place discussed above will address these issues, or another workgroup will be established to develop policy to address these issues.

All of the above policies will be developed into the Access Standard, which will become part of the *Child Protective Services Investigation Standards*, originally issued in 1994. Initial training on the new Intake Standard will be provided at regional roundtables. The

policies and criteria will also be integrated into the appropriate training courses provided by the Child Welfare Training Partnerships. The eWiSACWIS Project Team and BPP staff will analyze the current system design and make any necessary changes to support the new policies.

#### B. Safety Standards

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)].
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Increase our ability to help children remain safely at home by updating the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* regarding safety assessment, safety planning, and assessment of parental protective capacities.

As discussed in the 5-Year Report, safety assessment and planning is a skilled activity essential to CPS practice throughout the life of a case, yet it continues to be difficult for many caseworkers and supervisors. It is particularly difficult for staff to develop safety plans that are sufficient in controlling the threats to safety and to develop measurable treatment plans that are effective in establishing and maintaining a safe environment.

In studying the issue, the PEP Core Team came to believe that part of the problem was difficulty on the part of CPS staff to recognize and address various issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health problems. Although the safety assessment instrument and safety planning format in the Wisconsin Model and eWiSACWIS clearly incorporate the above concerns, as well as others that threaten a child's safety, caseworkers may not have the skills to identify them in all cases and to effectively manage them with in-home plans.

In addition to concerns about caseworker skills and knowledge, BPP staff and PEP Core Team participants identified the need to incorporate the concept of parental protective capacities – those behaviors and perceptions that act as a buffer and barrier to safety threats – in caseworker training and in policies and decision making instruments. Current policies reference protective capacities, some instruments, such as the family assessment, incorporate some protective capacities, and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships offer training which discusses protective capacities. However, there is a need to clearly incorporate the identification of parental protective capacities – those that exist and those that need to be enhanced – in all relevant decision making instruments throughout the case process and to assure that caseworkers and supervisors have the understanding and skills necessary to apply the concepts in achieving safe environments for children. This will

provide a clearer path for establishing sufficient in-home safety plans and for defining when a family is “done” and no further CPS services are needed.

Modifications may need to be made to the current safety assessment and safety planning instruments to reflect the current available wisdom on safety assessment. We began formally assessing safety as a distinct decision, separate from risk, in 1987. We revised the instruments over the years as new knowledge became available. We need to review recent advances in the field regarding safety decision-making and determine whether and how current instruments should be revised. To accomplish this:

- BPP will establish a workgroup of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal staff, with representatives from domestic violence programs. Using technical assistance from National Resource Center on Child Protective Services, BPP will update the *CPS Investigation Standards* and *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* to reflect the best current knowledge in safety and assure that staff recognize and understand the conditions and behaviors that make a child unsafe.
- Tools in eWiSACWIS will be revised, as necessary. BPP will develop and issue clear, comprehensive instructions for documenting safety assessments and safety plans in eWiSACWIS.
- Safety training curricula will be revised and expanded to reflect the revised standards and to support the acquisition of the skills necessary to develop, implement, and monitor effective safety plans. This may include the development of new courses in safety assessment and planning.

#### C. Family Participation

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Improve family participation in case planning.

As discussed in the CAPTA 5-Year Report, efforts have been made over the previous five years to increase family participation in case planning. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* require it, and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships have been providing training that reflects and supports the standard. However, this standard has not been achieved statewide. Barriers to achieving the standard include lack of clarity and detail regarding the policy, lack of skills necessary to engage the family and develop a less authoritarian helping relationship, high caseloads, and lack of a clear road map.

DCFS expects to provide a clearer road map through the efforts of the Access Standard workgroup and the workgroup clarifying and revising safety assessment and planning. To address concerns about lack of clarity in the policy requiring family involvement in case planning, a workgroup of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal staff will be established to revise the standards as needed to promote family participation in case plan development.

The access standard will be created and issues during the first two year PEP period. During the following three years, training to increase caseworker skills in engaging families will be developed or adapted from current successful curricula and delivered.

#### D. Safety of Children with Relatives

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Effectively assess the safety of a child placed in a relative's home.

Although the Wisconsin Model (and EWiSACWIS) have, as part of the Out-Of-Home Safety Plan instrument, a process for assessing the safety of a specific child when placed in a specific licensed facility, there is currently no process for assessing safety specific to an unlicensed relative's home. CPS staff have been reluctant to place children in relatives' homes in the absence of a clear process for assessing the safety of that placement. Some of the safety threats in the safety assessment tool used with families are applicable, but revisions and additions are needed to respond to the questions and concerns that must be addressed when placing a child with a relative.

DCFS will review current models for assessing the safety of kinship placements, as well as relevant literature, and seek technical assistance from the NRCCM to develop criteria, policy, and procedures for assessing safety in kinship placements. We will:

- issue the policy and develop and issue guidance for documenting the assessment within the current eWiSACWIS system
- work with the Child Welfare Training Partnerships to include this safety assessment procedure in the relevant training curricula

The above activities will be completed within 2 years. In subsequent years, DCFS will review whether eWiSACWIS should be modified to include a specific instrument for assessing safety in kinship homes, rather than requiring the use of existing documentation formats.

## E. Program Coordination

### CAPTA areas:

- Creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency protocols to enhance investigations; and improving legal preparation and representation, including—(i) procedures for appealing and responding to appeals of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect; and (ii) provisions for the appointment of an individual appointed to represent a child in judicial proceedings. [section 106(a)(2)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

### Child Protective Services/Law Enforcement Coordination

Wisconsin goal: Improve the coordination between CPS and law enforcement agencies to increase safety for children and other family members while assuring clarity in the differences between the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Many county agencies in Wisconsin have long-standing cooperative working relationships with their local law enforcement agencies. These relationships vary from those where roles are clearly differentiated to those where roles and activities are somewhat merged. The issuance of the *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies*, developed with input from law enforcement officials, began a discussion between the two systems regarding roles and procedures. The new CAPTA requirements for advising the alleged maltreater of the allegations at the first contact and for training to assure that CPS staff understand and observe the rights of families have helped to underscore the need for further discussion and policy development to continue to promote coordination while clearly differentiating roles and responsibilities.

Wisconsin's situation may be unique in that CPS responds to cases of abuse by persons not in a caregiving role, thus overlapping significantly with law enforcement cases. DCFS will work with counties to study the need for legislative changes to clarify the CPS role with non-caregiver situations.

The National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues provided training and technical assistance in June of 2004 to a group consisting of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal CPS staff, as well as corporation counsels, assistant district attorneys, law enforcement and state legal staff, state quality assurance staff, and representatives of the Child Welfare Training Partnerships. As this plan is being written prior to the occurrence of this event, DCFS does not currently know what issues for policy development, training for CPS and law enforcement, or statutory change might be identified by the group. Based on the group's observations and recommendations, and consistent with other initiatives in the PEP, DCFS will develop a work plan to assist both CPS agencies and law enforcement agencies to adjust to any changes needed in their protocols and procedures.

This work plan is likely to involve the Department of Justice in supporting training for law enforcement officers.

Other initiatives are likely to impact procedures and protocols between CPS and law enforcement: determining who CPS serves, evaluating the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision, and requiring greater emphasis on engaging families. We will continue involving law enforcement professionals over the next five years in identifying the impact on their agencies resulting from changes in CPS practice and policy and advocate for training and other supports that will assist in any changes that law enforcement agencies might need to make.

### DV/CPS Collaboration Project

Wisconsin goal: Improve the CPS response in cases where domestic violence is present.

The DCFS plans to continue its efforts in supporting and enhancing the collaborative relationship between domestic violence and CPS agencies. Specialized curriculum on domestic violence for CPS caseworkers will be updated to reflect changes in law, best practice, and policy. This will include an expanded training component on collaboration with domestic violence service providers.

Information on domestic violence issues will be included as part of pre-service and/or foundation training.

The DCFS will also:

- Include information on the identification of and response to domestic violence in the development of the CPS Intake Standard and update of the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*. This is linked with the PEP-related activities discussed earlier in this 5-Year Plan.
- Identify other child welfare policy areas with domestic violence-related safety concerns and work with DV advocates to address the changes needed.
- Continue the annual joint regional meetings of DV and CPS agencies.
- Continue regular training and updates on the CPS system and policies for DV program staff.

### Guardian ad Litem Training

Wisconsin goal: Support an ongoing multi-disciplinary effort to provide training for guardians ad litem.

DCFS will continue to cosponsor the Guardian ad Litem conference each fall. BPP staff are involved in the multi-disciplinary planning committee to assure that information critical to representing children who have been maltreated, who are unsafe in their homes, or who are in the out-of-home care system is presented at each conference.

## F. Coordinated Services

CAPTA area:

- Supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system, and private community-based programs to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems) and to address the health needs, including mental health needs, of children identified as abused or neglected, including supporting prompt, comprehensive health and developmental evaluations for children who are the subject of substantiated child maltreatment reports. [section 106(a)(14)].

Wisconsin goal: Expand the coordinated services team initiative.

The Coordinated Services Team (CST) initiative continues. Although the initiative is not funded by CAPTA, the staff position funded by CAPTA will continue to provide technical assistance to the initiative to assure consistency with the Standards for all cases that are part of the CPS system.

The effort to evaluate and compare the case planning format for CPS cases with the format for CST cases will continue as part of the PEP activities described above in reviewing and revising Standards.

## G. Substantiation Decision

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)].

Wisconsin goal: Assess the impact of the substantiation decision on the effectiveness of safety assessment and safety plans and the effectiveness of efforts to engage the family in meaningful treatment planning.

“Substantiation” is the finding made by child protective services (CPS) staff that a child has been maltreated or that a specific person has maltreated a child and is based on the lowest evidentiary standard (i.e., a preponderance of the evidence). There are problems associated with substantiation. It is used for purposes for which it was not originally intended (e.g., criminal prosecutions, gatekeeping for CHIPS proceedings, licensing and employment decisions, and gatekeeping for case opening and eligibility for services). This problem is heightened by the lack of uniformity in application from one county to another in terms of what is considered abuse and neglect, and which cases are screened in and screened out.

Substantiation creates problems unique to Wisconsin CPS. The statutory definitions of physical abuse and sexual abuse include abuse to a child by any other person, including

another child. This has led to young children being substantiated as child abusers rather than identified as children in need of protection or services. It has also led to CPS staff substantiating individuals as maltreaters in cases of stranger assault, date rape, and other assaults on children by persons in a non-caregiving role, including homicides, in the midst of a law enforcement investigation.

Under federal regulation and state law, any person substantiated as having maltreated a child is entitled to an appeal of that decision. The substantiation appeal process has resulted in counties not substantiating a person as maltreating a child even if they could. A particular concern regarding the appeal process is that children who have been abused may be called to testify at an administrative hearing against a parent with whom they are residing. This raises additional safety, as well as many other, concerns for the child. In cases where both a CPS assessment and a law enforcement investigation are being conducted, district attorneys and law enforcement agencies have voiced concern that the administrative hearing to appeal the substantiation decision is used by defense attorneys as a fishing expedition that undermines the criminal prosecution.

Substantiating maltreatment epitomizes incident-based child protective services practice, which Wisconsin has been moving away from. The *CPS Investigation Standards*, originally established in 1994, emphasizes safety and risk assessment to determine a family's need for services to reduce risk and establish and maintain safety. Identifying safety issues leads to actions to protect the safety of the child; substantiation of maltreatment merely identifies who did what to whom.

DCFS is proposing to establish a two-phase approach to resolving issues and determining policy. First, a workgroup comprised of state, county, and tribal staff will discuss the problems/issues and develop preliminary recommendations, ranging from clearer policy and additional training to the elimination of substantiation as a case finding. This will involve the use of research, both national and Wisconsin-specific, related to issues around substantiation, including reliability and validity and effectiveness in protecting children. The second phase will add selected groups to the discussion, including law enforcement, district attorneys and corporation counsels, licensing staff, legislators, and the child welfare training partnerships. DCFS will involve staff of both the Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services, with whom we have already been consulting.

The workgroup recommendations, if implemented will require training for a variety of county staff, including CPS, court/legal, and law enforcement. In addition, DCFS may need to counteract the misperception that making changes to substantiating maltreaters represents a "softer" approach to child abuse. At the same time, this may be an opportunity for DCFS to clarify that, while both CPS and law enforcement are often both involved in child abuse/neglect cases, they have unique roles and functions.

### Description of Services and Training to be Provided [sec. 106(b)(2)(C)]

The majority of the training to be provided with CAPTA funds has been described above. In addition, CAPTA funds will continue to be used to cosponsor the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, which provides training and networking opportunities for CPS staff, services providers, advocates, mandated reporters, and others involved in the broader child protection system.

Funding will be provided to each of the four Child Welfare Training Partnerships to fund curriculum development and training for CPS staff and supervisors not eligible for funding under Title IV-E. The next planned revisions of the Core training of the Partnerships will be for the activities and skills necessary for intake and initial assessment. These curricula will be modified as soon as the policies and standards revisions are completed by the workgroups discussed above in the State Plan. As other training needs are identified as a result of policy development, CAPTA funds will be used to support that training, at least in part.

An area where DCFS will continue to focus our training efforts is safety decision making. The DCFS has been working with the Training Partnerships and ACTION for Child Protection to develop, revise, and provide additional safety training in the state. We are currently in the process of training trainers statewide. The training will begin to be offered across the state this summer. Following is a description of the training:

*Managing Sufficient Safety in CPS* is a two-day learning experience for caseworkers and supervisors emphasizing providing sufficient safety intervention. The two-day workshop is followed by a complementary supervisory learning opportunity concerned with consultation. Training begins with a review of basic safety assessment and safety planning competencies leading to consideration of sufficiency of safety plans. The curriculum promotes safety intervention as a continuum of assessment and planning not specific to a particular function. The curriculum addresses essential knowledge and skill required by all CPS staff regardless of initial assessment or ongoing assignment. The curriculum will emphasize critical safety assessment competency, developing sufficient safety plans, and managing sufficient safety plans. The curriculum includes attention to safety management of safety plans within ongoing CPS.

For the most part, CAPTA funds are used to support training, policy development, technical assistance, and program development rather than direct services to individuals, families, or communities. CAPTA funds support a full-time position in the DCFS, a CPS Specialist, who, in addition to coordinating policy and program development and training initiatives, responds directly to the public on concerns about how CPS cases have been handled, how to access services and other resources, and how the CPS program and child welfare system in Wisconsin generally operate. This position also provides technical assistance to communities and providers that are developing policies and practices about interaction with the CPS system as they seek to provide better services to their clients.

#### Assurances/Compliance with New Eligibility Requirements

The following is a description of Wisconsin's compliance with the new CAPTA requirements added in 2003. Statutory language referenced in this section can be found at: <http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/quickfind.html>, choosing Chapter 48 Children's Code and entering in the appropriate statute number.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(ii)] *Policies and procedures...to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substances or withdrawal symptoms from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers ...notify the child protective services system...*

Wisconsin Statutes state that “Any hospital employee who provides health care, social worker or [court appointed] intake worker ...may refer an infant ... to a physician for testing of the bodily fluids ... for controlled substances or controlled substance analogs...The physician may test the infant ... to ascertain whether or not the infant ... has controlled substances or controlled substance analogs in the bodily fluids...If the results of the test indicate that the infant does have controlled substances or controlled substance analogs in the infant's bodily fluids, the physician shall make a report under s.46.238...” [Sec.146.0255, WI Stats.]

The report is not made under Chapter 48, the Children's Code, and therefore is not a child abuse or neglect report. Instead, the report is made under Chapter 46, which is the authority establishing county human/social service departments.

Although this statutory language has existed for some years and CPS agencies have been accepting and responding to such reports, a policy memo was issued reminding CPS agencies of their responsibility to accept such reports.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(iii)] *The development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms.*

Wisconsin Statutes state “If a county department ... or [BMCW] receives a report under s.146.0255 (2), the county department shall offer to provide appropriate services and treatment to the child and the child's mother...or the county department shall make arrangements for the provision of appropriate services or treatment.” [Sec. 46.238, Stats.].

This statutory language has also existed for some years. The policy memo issued reminding county agencies and BMCW of their responsibility to accept such reports (see above) included policy requiring an assessment of safety of the child and the development and execution of a safety plan, if the child is determined to be unsafe.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(iv)] *Procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports.*

Risk assessment tools, in addition to a safety assessment tool, are part of eWiSACWIS and the Wisconsin Model. Risk assessment and safety assessment are required by the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(v)] *Triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service.*

Policy was developed and issued requiring CPS agencies to provide information and referral services to community agencies for families that they have determined do not need CPS services following an initial assessment and families they have determined no longer need CPS services following a case progress evaluation. The discussion with the family and the referral process must be documented in the case record. This has been the practice in most CPS agencies for years and is now reflected in published policy.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(ix)] *Provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.*

Existing state statutory language authorizes disclosure to a “federal agency, state agency of this state or any other state or local governmental unit located in this state or any other state that has a need for a report or record in order to carry out its responsibility to protect children from abuse and neglect...” [Sec. 48.981(7)(a)17., Stats]. The Wisconsin Attorney General issued an opinion that the statutory language requires that information be released to the authorized entities or person on demand.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii)] *Provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role,...shall be appointed to represent the child.*

In 1997, Wisconsin established Supreme Court Rule Chapter 35 (Eligibility for Appointment as Guardian ad Litem for a Minor), which prohibits an attorney from accepting a GAL appointment from the court in juvenile and family court proceedings unless specified training criteria are met. The rule became effective in 1999. Enforcement of the rule is handled at the county level.

Under s. 48.07(5)(c), Stats., Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers must complete a training program prior to being designated as a CASA and each volunteer must complete continuing education annually. The training shall include instruction on recognizing child abuse and neglect, cultural competency, child development, court procedures, permanency planning, the role of the CASA volunteer, information gathering and documentation, and juvenile court observation.

In addition to the above requirements, there is a conference every year with training for guardians ad litem, for which they receive credit. The GAL conference is well attended every year and receives high evaluations from participants. DCFS staff are involved in planning for the conference and DCFS is a co-sponsor of the conference.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii)] *Provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter*

Policy was developed, published, and disseminated requiring CPS representatives to advise the alleged maltreater, at the beginning of the initial contact, of the allegations against him or her. The policy was developed with input from county CPS staff, tribal child welfare staff, law enforcement, and legal counsel. It balances a person's right to honest information with the need to fulfill statutory mandates to protect children from serious harm.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix)] *Provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment.*

Training on the new requirement was provided in 2004 for representative CPS managers, corporation counsels, law enforcement officers, and training staff. The training will be continued as necessary. A brochure for parents, including a description of the CPS process and the family's rights, is being developed and will be issued to all counties and tribes and BMCW to use when interviewing parents by the end of the 2004.

Representatives from the Child Welfare Training Partnerships participated in training in order to begin to assess how to integrate the legal duties of CPS representatives and the legal rights of families into core training curricula.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx)] *Provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers.*

A major initiative in Wisconsin's PEP is expanding the frequency, accessibility, and application value of child welfare training in Wisconsin. This includes significant training for supervisors to assist them in providing clinical supervision for caseworkers. Another initiative in the PEP is to evaluate the workload of caseworkers and supervisors and the availability and accessibility of services needed to keep children safe and address the underlying contributors to child abuse and neglect. It was the opinion of the PEP Core Team that reasonable workloads and the availability of needed services are critical to retaining child welfare staff.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi)] *Provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

A policy requiring referral to early intervention services (Birth to 3 Program) of a child under the age of 3 years who is substantiated as having been abused or neglected was developed, published, and disseminated to all county CPS agencies and BMCW. The policy was developed with input from county CPS professionals, Birth to 3 Program Staff and legal counsel. Activities related to the referral must be documented in the case record.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii)] *Not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36), provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household.*

Wisconsin Statutes state that “The department, a county department, a child welfare agency or a school board shall obtain all of the following with respect to a [foster home, treatment foster home, group home, shelter care facility and adoptive home and] a non client resident of an entity...: A criminal history search from the records maintained by the department of justice...” [Sec. 48.685(2)(am), Stats.]

Citizen Review Panel Requirements - The 2003 CAPTA amendments created the following additional requirements.

- *requiring each citizen review panel to examine the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of State and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities [section 106(c)(4)(A)];*
- *requiring each panel to provide for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community [section 106(c)(4)(C)]; and*
- *requiring each panel to make recommendations to the State and public on improving the child protective services system at the State and local levels. The appropriate State agency is to respond to the panel and State and local child protective services agencies in writing no later than six months after the panel recommendations are submitted. The State agency's response must include a description of whether or how*

*the State will incorporate the recommendations of the panel (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the State and local CPS systems [section 106(c)(6)].*

Some of the functions of the Citizen Review Panels are being incorporated into the quality assurance procedures being developed as part of Wisconsin PEP. Citizen Review Panel members will participate in CFSR-type program reviews, which will include a review of practice not only in their own counties but also in other counties across the state. This will give them a broader view of practice and policy in the state.

A description of the new requirements has been shared with each panel. More funding is being appropriated to the three citizen review panels to assist them in carrying out the additional functions. In addition, more technical assistance will be provided by the DCFS, and DCFS will also increase coordination of the Citizen Review Panel activities with other quality assurance and policy development activities.

Citizen Review Panel members participated in the training and discussion conducted by the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues on family rights. They will be part of informing changes in CPS practice in Wisconsin related to assuring that family rights are understood and respected throughout a family's involvement with CPS. Citizen Review Panel members will also be part of the workgroups established, as discussed in the State Plan, to develop, clarify, and modify statewide policies and standards of practice.

## **CFSP for FFY 2006**

### **Chafee Independent Living Program**

Wisconsin will continue to operate its Independent Living (IL) Program to address the needs of youth in and exiting foster care, comply with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act), and follow the recommendations of the Wisconsin June 2000 *Independent Living for Children in Out-of-Home Care* study. IL services are provided through Wisconsin's county-administered child welfare service system and by tribes, and programs may vary in their approaches to implement and administer independent living services.

#### *Program Eligibility*

Wisconsin's IL Program provides services and supports to youth aged 15-21 years. Eligibility for Wisconsin Chafee services includes those youth that have been in out-of-home care (OHC) placement in Wisconsin for at least 6 months after the age of 15 or older with eligibility continuing to the age of 21 years. Youth that are in OHC placement for six months and adopted after the age of 15 years are also eligible for services. Youth exiting care prior to age 18 due to adoption, guardianship (s. 48.977), long-term Kinship Care or hospitalization, may continue to be eligible for IL services, although eligibility for certain benefits (e.g., room and board, Medicaid) may be limited by the Chafee Act.

#### *Distribution of Funds*

Chafee funds are allocated via State/County and State/Tribal contracts. Recipients of CFCIP and ETV-funded allocations will be expanded in 2005 to include 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. The Chafee funding will continue to be utilized to develop, expand, and strengthen local independent living services for youth. The State allocates funding to these local agencies based on the average number of youth eligible for and receiving independent living services in each community. This formula was developed and utilized to ensure that each agency receives an amount of the available funding that is commensurate with the number of local youth eligible for and receiving assistance to achieve independence.

Wisconsin expects to continue to receive reductions in federal Chafee funds due to declining out-of-home care caseloads. These reductions have occurred despite the fact that the number of older youth eligible for and receiving IL services has increased during the funding periods. While Wisconsin will strive to ensure that youth receive efficient and effective IL services and supports, significant program changes may become necessary over the next few years to reflect the decreased federal resources and an increased service population.

### Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program:

- 1. Describe how the State will establish, expand or strengthen its post secondary education and training to achieve the purpose of the ETV program and to accomplish the purposes of the Acts. Describe the methods used to operate the program efficiently and assure compliance with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i):*

The DCFS utilizes the ETV program funds to expand the independent living services at the state and local levels. The existing DCFS Scholarship Program for youth aging out of out-of-home care will increase the amount of the individual scholarships available to youth for post-secondary education and training and extend the period for which youth will be eligible for the scholarship funds. Additional funding will be provided to local agencies to expand services and increase financial support to assist youth with preparation for and participation in post-secondary institutions.

The ETV program was implemented in 2004 by county and tribal child welfare agencies 2004. DCFS Memo Series 2003-10 provided direction for implementation of the new program and outlines program requirements. The memo describes ETV Program requirements and desired outcomes that must be met while allowing individual agencies the flexibility to implement the services locally in the most effective manner possible for all youth. Regional meetings are held to further explain and discuss program implementation, requirements, and practice issues regarding the ETV program.

To increase the likelihood that youth will be motivated and eligible to participate in post-secondary institutions, local agency Independent Living Coordinators will coordinate team and other resource involvement in addition to working directly with youth for several years prior to their aging out of out-of-home care. Youth will be supported using the original CFCIP funds to complete a high school education or equivalent, improving their ability to meet post-secondary education or training program eligibility requirements. The CFCIP and ETV Programs will then provide ongoing support to youth by providing services and financial assistance necessary to help them successfully participate in and complete post-secondary programs.

It is anticipated that services, support, and financial assistance will be individualized, based on the assessment of the youth's needs. Generally, assistance will be provided in accordance with the following guidelines:

- DCFS Scholarship Program will provide funding for any direct costs; i.e., tuition and fees associated with attending an institution of higher learning.
- Scholarships will not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- Local agencies will utilize ETV funds for the purchase of technical equipment or assistance to include, but not be limited to, computers, calculators, and supplies associated with post-secondary coursework.
- DCFS Scholarship Program and local agencies may provide additional assistance or support necessary for successful completion of higher education,

including, but not limited to: tutoring, transportation, books, child care, housing, program entry testing, costs, incentives, leadership/workshop/vocational activities, etc.

ETV funds will be allocated and accounted for via separate contracting, accounting, and reporting processes.

## **2. *Program Eligibility:***

- Education and training vouchers (ETV) will be available to all youth meeting current State independent living eligibility criteria (i.e., youth aged 15 to 21 years placed in out-of-home care at the age of 15 or older for a period of not less than six months) for costs associated with post-secondary attendance and participation.
- Eligibility will also be extended to youth up to 23 years of age who were participating in the voucher program on the date they attained age 21, as long as they are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.
- Youth adopted from foster care after attaining 6 months in out-of-home care followed by adoption at the age of 15 years or older shall be considered eligible for ETV program assistance.

## **3. *Education and Training Vouchers Program Criteria:***

- Vouchers shall be available for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Voucher amounts shall not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of that Act.
- The amount of a voucher under this section shall be disregarded for purposes of determining the recipient's eligibility for, or the amount of, any other Federal or federally-supported assistance, except that the total amount of all assistance should not exceed the total cost of attendance. The DCFS Scholarship Program shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal or federally-supported programs.
- The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs. State and local agencies will partner with secondary and post-secondary institutions and each other to increase awareness of the educational challenges faced by youth aging out of out-of-home care and the ETV Program. This collaboration was initiated by Wisconsin in 2001 under the CFCIP, resulting in the development of the statewide Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group. Modifications to the existing DCFS Scholarship Program were made according to input received by all of these partners to better meet needs of youth while fulfilling the new requirements of the ETV program.

***Program Development:***

- Assessments of youth skill, needs, and interest areas will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Youth, child welfare agencies, foster parents, and biological family members will participate in development of case plans to support youth's educational goals. Case plans shall include, but are not limited to, assisting youth to: identify post-secondary education or training as a viable option, identify potential vocations and careers, identify and address other areas of need (e.g., housing, transportation) that impact successful participation in higher education, and develop Independent Living Transition Plans to enhance the success of the youth transitioning to self sufficiency.
- Outreach efforts to continue supporting youth after leaving out-of-home care will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Additional efforts will be implemented to inform, remind, and encourage these youth of the higher education assistance available to them prior to reaching age 21 and potentially up to age 23.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program will be expanded to include scholarship funds up to \$5000 per youth per year and allow youths to receive assistance through the fund on an ongoing basis as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. Youth must complete an application for the scholarship program and provide proof of acceptance to the post-secondary institution.
- Funding for attendance costs at post-secondary institutions will be provided directly to the institution upon receipt of a letter of acceptance/admission from the institution on behalf of the youth.
- Purchase orders may be utilized for other costs associated with participation in the post-secondary program.
- Data will be maintained by the local agencies and the DCFS Scholarship Program, including: the number of youth completing a high school education, the number of youth attending post-secondary institutions, the number and types of degrees or certification achieved by participating youth, and the amount and type of financial assistance provided utilizing ETV funds.
- Independent living roundtables regarding the ETV Program were held prior to program implementation in 2003-04 and will continue to be held in 2005. These meetings are scheduled in various regions around the State to provide technical assistance to local Independent Living Coordinators and facilitate sharing and discussion between caseworkers and agencies regarding practice issues in the area of helping youth access and achieve higher education.

## Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)

1. *Discuss how the state will design, conduct and/or strengthen programs to achieve the purposes of section 477(b)(2)(A) and section 477(a)(1-6) of the Act.*

**Political Subdivisions:** Wisconsin has 72 counties and 11 federally-recognized tribes. All counties are currently and will continue operating CFCIP-funded independent living programs. Tribes have been given the opportunity to receive CFCIP funds from the State to operate tribal independent living programs. Three of the 11 tribes, Ho-Chunk, Lac du Flambeau, and Lac Courte Oreilles receive independent living funds to serve eligible tribal youth. Independent living services by tribes are coordinated with services by county agencies through child welfare coordination agreements between counties and tribes called 161 agreements. The DCFS will consider funding other tribes that wish to operate independent living programs.

All Wisconsin counties have historically operated some aspects of independent living programs, including working with foster care providers to teach youth independent living skills and permanency planning responsibilities. The majority of counties also provided services to improve the skills of youth to prepare them to exit out-of-home care and make successful transitions to adulthood. With the implementation of CFCIP, funds have been allocated to all counties so they can provide services to improve skills of youth aged 15-18 and a transitional services component for youth age 18-21. Smaller counties were encouraged to form multi-county consortia to deliver independent living services, particularly services to improve skills of youth aged 15-18 and the transitional services component for youth aged 18-21. In 2005, nine counties are organized into 4 service consortia.

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program will design and deliver programs to achieve the purposes of sections 477(b)(2)(A) and 477(a)(1-6) of the Act. CFSP statewide goals and activities to address these purposes are as follow:

### *A. Help Youth Transition to Self-Sufficiency*

- Continue providing an array of services and support for youth that address the following areas: secondary education, post-secondary education, vocational and employment support, daily living skills, budget and financial management, housing, health education and prevention, connection to caring adults, and risk prevention. Program design may vary according to geographic factors; e.g., rural or urban, availability of community resources, housing options. Agencies funded for IL services may serve youth directly or contract for IL services through other agencies. Collaboration with other professionals, caring adults, human service agencies, and other community resources will remain a critical source for obtaining and coordinating services for youth.

- Continue providing financial assistance as appropriate for room and board, education, and other needs that may arise as youth work to achieve self-sufficiency. Local IL programs are allowed to spend up to 25% of their allocation for room and board for youth meeting the room and board requirements (i.e., youth aging out of care that are in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) as stated in the Chafee Act. Youth may receive Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program assistance locally or through the state's DCFS Scholarship Program. Other financial assistance for IL-related costs may be provided at the discretion of the local agency. Connecting youth to other community resources that assist clients financially will also be utilized.
- Assess each youth's level of independent living skills functioning and develop an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) to address assessed areas of need and youth interests. Individual assessments and plans are required for each eligible youth; however, agencies may select the assessment method or tool used and the ILTP format.
- Provide IL training for IL Coordinators, foster parents, members of youth teams, and other county, tribal, and private agency caseworkers. The State IL Coordinator, upon request from local agencies, will conduct Basic IL Training for new IL coordinators. Life skills development and other IL training will be developed and conducted in coordination with the University of Wisconsin's Training Partnerships, the National Resource Center for Youth Development, and other resources as appropriate to address specific topics of interest or concern. Sessions on independent living may also be incorporated into other existing training curricula.
- Increase the involvement of foster parents as a key resource for ongoing youth support and skills development. Independent living skills are learned over a lifetime, beginning at a very young age. Foster parents are important people in the healthy development of children and young adults. The foster home is a setting where skills training may be planned or can occur naturally in the course of daily activities. Local IL programs will continue their efforts to work with youth and foster parents, incorporating foster parents as trainers for youth skill development. This will be documented in the Independent Living Transition Plan and the training activities reported annually in the IL reports.
- Seek legislative approval to extend Medicaid eligibility for youth exiting care at age 18 or older up to age 21 to ensure ongoing health care and increased access to and utilization of health services. In the past few years, Wisconsin has been unable to achieve extended Medicaid benefits for youth aging out of care. Efforts to extend Medicaid eligibility will be ongoing.
- Increase youth participation in the ongoing evaluation and development of IL services. A Youth Advisory Council was created in 2004 and will continue. Other youth meetings and forums to encourage the sharing of information about their experiences in the child welfare system will be organized in various regions around the state. Information gained from these meetings and other communication with youth will be

utilized for assessing existing services, informing policy development, and determining direction for future youth-directed activities.

- Determine if maintaining the current eligibility criteria for IL services is possible. Due to decreased federal funding, it may be necessary to revise the IL eligibility criteria for youth in Wisconsin. Currently, youth that have been in out-of-home care for at least six months after the age of 15 years are eligible for IL services and remain eligible up to 21 years. An ongoing analysis of funding, eligible youth, and affordable services will be conducted to determine if this criterion must be revised to effectively serve only those older youth with more intense needs and fewer natural supports.
- Implement federal IL reporting requirements when finalized. Incorporate independent living reporting into the eWiSACWIS system. Wisconsin has modified its existing IL reporting forms to include the proposed National Youth Transition Database (NYTD) Data Items (version dated December 2003). These forms will be disseminated to counties and tribes for annual reporting until the federal reporting requirements are finalized. At that time, the eWiSACWIS system will be modified to include the required IL data elements for annual reports.

*B. Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain **employment**.*

- Continue to assess all eligible youth for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance, and develop an Independent Living Transition Plan based on the assessed levels of skill and youth input.
- Continue to provide all eligible youth with an array of services to support education and training for employment. Youth receiving IL services will receive training, experiential learning experiences, and support to identify, seek, obtain, and maintain employment. Youth assistance may include, but is not limited to, the following areas: procuring of necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work-related experience.
- Continue referral and outreach services to link youth to other community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. For youth to become and remain successfully employed, collaboration among IL coordinators, local job services programs, school counselors, teachers, and community resource agencies must occur. Youth will be assisted in identifying career choices and planning the steps necessary to achieve employment. IL coordinators will assist youth with these tasks and link them to the appropriate resource for continued education, job seeking, job training, transportation, etc.
- Annually compile and analyze data for IL employment-related services and outcomes.

*C. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions*

- Develop an Independent Living Transition Plan for each eligible youth that identifies and addresses educational needs and goals for achieving post-secondary education and training. Efforts to assist youth with post-secondary education and training must start several years prior to high school completion. IL Coordinators, school counselors, friends, and family play an important part in motivating youth to pursue higher education or training, followed by helping them identify steps that need to be taken. Education plans containing individualized goals and objectives will be developed for each youth. IL Coordinators will continue to work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting necessary requirements. Where available, youth will also be connected to pre-college programs.
- Design, implement, and strengthen the statewide ETV Program to locally assist youth with post-secondary related needs and costs. In 2004, the ETV Program was implemented in Wisconsin. ETV Program funds were allocated to 71 counties, 2 tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. In 2005, the list of agencies receiving ETV Program funds was expanded to include the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. ETV Program funds received by local agencies will be utilized to develop and maintain post-secondary related assistance for former foster youth. Agencies and youth will be encouraged to utilize the DCFS Scholarship Program for payment of tuition, fees, and books. All other costs and types of support will be provided via the local agency.
- Increase the amount of funding available for youth scholarships through the DCFS Scholarship Program. In 2004, the amount of funding for the DCFS Scholarship Program was increased from \$100,000 to \$125,000 annually. This amount will increase to \$157,740 in 2005. The DCFS Scholarship Program was created to provide grants for post-secondary related education and training for former foster youth. The awards follow the federal ETV Program guidelines, and scholarship awards combined with local ETV Program assistance is limited to \$5,000 per youth annually.
- Continue the efforts of the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group to help youth access and achieve higher education. The HEOY Advisory Group consists of members of the higher education community along with DCFS and private agency staff. The group will update and develop informational memos and resource materials for statewide dissemination to higher education staff, child welfare caseworkers, youth, foster parents, and other interested parties. Panel presentations to increase awareness about the challenges faced by youth and potential resources will be scheduled around the state. The panel will also help train IL Coordinators and others connected to youth to help them successfully access and maneuver within the higher education system. Efforts will also be ongoing to meet with higher education institutions to help them recognize and develop ways to reach out and help former foster youth access and achieve post-secondary education and training.

- Compile and analyze data regarding secondary and post-secondary services, support, and outcomes.
- D. Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.*
- Continue efforts to connect youth to caring adults prior to and after leaving care. IL Coordinators will continue to help youth identify and develop positive relationships with caring adults in their communities. Natural connections with foster parents, social workers, teachers, and family members will continue to be encouraged and supported. Youth may also be connected to organizations in their communities where children are linked with mentors. With youth who are reluctant or unable to connect with others through these more typical means, connections with IL Coordinators and other child welfare caseworkers may become the primary contact for youth leaving care. These connections will be documented in each youth's ILTP.
  - Continue to collect data regarding mentoring services and outcomes.
- E. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment and education and other appropriate support and services for former foster care youth ages 18-21 years.*
- Provide youth with life history and critical documents prior to leaving out-of-home care placement. Efforts will continue to ensure that youth have copies of their birth certificates, social security cards, insurance cards, medical records, high school diploma or high school completion documents, written employment history, and other personal information about their lives and families.
  - Every youth aging out of care will have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care (OHC). Youth will participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence. Each eligible youth in OHC placement must have an ILTP that is based on an IL skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. As the youth approaches leaving care at 18 years or older, the ILTP will identify ongoing IL needs, goals, and outcomes, and describe how needs will be met and goals/outcomes achieved. The plans, services, and activities will address, but are not limited to, the following areas: high school completion, post-secondary education or training, career planning and employment, safe and stable housing, transportation, health and medical needs/services, community resources, support systems, finances, and youth self goals. The ILTP will also contain contact information for family, friends, and other caring adults identified by the youth to confirm support systems and simplify IL Coordinators' ability to locate and communicate with youth who have left care.
  - Continue to make available an array of services and support for 18-21-year-olds. Youth no longer in care will be educated regarding community resources and, where appropriate, assisted to ensure knowledge of how to access resources. Youth will be

informed regarding financial assistance, including CFCIP or ETV Program funds, which may be available at the local level. Youth will also be informed about ongoing classes or events where they are welcomed and encouraged to participate. They will leave care with contact information for the IL Coordinator and any social workers or other significant people in child welfare system with whom the youth is familiar or may have developed positive relationships. If no such relationship exists, at a minimum, contact information for the IL Coordinator will still be provided in the event of future needs or crises.

- Provide room and board assistance for youth aging out of care that were in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays. Agencies may use up to 25% of their IL allocation for room and board payments for eligible youth.

**Room and board definition:** In accordance with the Chafee Act, only those youth in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays will be eligible for room and board assistance. Chafee funds may be utilized to provide financial assistance to eligible youth for the purpose of obtaining and establishing safe and stable housing. Room and board payments may be made to service providers, vendors, or youth to set up residence. Room and board may include security deposits, rent, furniture, utilities hook-up or payments, and other housing-related necessities. The county or tribe will assess individual youth's room and board needs and determine the level of room and board assistance that will be provided.

Emergency financial assistance for immediate shelter due to temporary, crisis situations will be available for all IL eligible youth and does not fall under the definition of room and board.

*F. Make available vouchers for post-secondary education and training for youths who have aged out of care.*

- Continue the development of Wisconsin's Education and Training Vouchers Program. Counties, tribes, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections will receive an annual allocation for the development and provision of local ETV Programs. Local agencies will ensure that IL eligible youth are informed about and have access to ETV Program assistance and funding. Each agency will have a policy and procedure for the administration of this program. ETV Program funds will be utilized only for post-secondary related activities and costs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to counties and tribes for the implementation and maintenance of the ETV Program. Regular technical assistance regarding ETV Program regulations, practices, policies, and procedures will be available for all counties and tribes. Meetings will be scheduled in all regions around the state to discuss program and practice issues and share information across agencies. A section for the ETV Program has been incorporated into the IL Basic Training curriculum and will be modified as needed for training sessions.

- Utilize ETV funding for scholarship awards for post-secondary tuition, fees, and books for eligible youth. The DCFS Scholarship Program will increase the level of funding available for scholarships to \$157,740 in 2005. Award payments will be made directly to the institution for the payment of tuition, fees, and books for each youth receiving a grant.
- Collect annual data and reports on the progress of local ETV Program efforts. Maintain data on the DCFS Scholarship Program funded with ETV Program funds.

2. *Describe how youth of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence are to be served.*

Independent living skills must be learned over the life span of the child, and foster parents are recognized as the primary trainers of IL skills for these youth. Helping youth gain skills necessary for self-sufficiency requires the involvement of foster parents, staff, classroom instructors, experiential training providers, life experiences, and ongoing support and safety nets.

Independent living (IL) services are required for all Wisconsin youth in out-of-home care placement for at least six months after the age of 15 years. While youth are in OHC, independent living services must be available and offered to all eligible youth. Services may include one-on-one training that occurs in natural environments, classroom training, and experiential learning. Trainers of IL skills may include foster parents, IL Coordinators, school staff, mentors, family members, and training programs offered through other community resources, agencies, or contracted services. Local agencies may design their IL programs and services to address the needs of youth based on number of eligible youth and geographic resources and barriers.

IL services are designed to target those areas designated in the Chafee Act and other individualized youth needs as assessed and addressed in the ILTP. Although the availability and provision of IL services are required, youth participation in those services is voluntary. Services may include, but are not limited to, the following areas: daily living skills, secondary and post-secondary education, obtaining drivers licenses, awareness and accessing of resources, budgeting and financial management, vocational and employment counseling, housing assistance, health education, prevention of risky behaviors, and accessing medical and mental health services.

All of the described services are available for youth aged 15-20 years meeting the IL eligibility criteria.

**Barriers:** There are no statutory barriers negatively impacting IL programs. However, there are other barriers that are being evaluated to determine if mitigation is possible. These include:

- The lack of continued Medicaid eligibility and other health insurance programs for youth aged 18 and older leaving OHC placement.
- The reluctance of some local agencies to allow youth to participate in driver education and obtain their drivers licenses prior to exiting OHC placement.
- The lack of transitional living program residences in many areas of the state for youth exiting OHC placement.
- A reduction in CFCIP and ETV Program funding to serve an increasing number of older youth in and exiting OHC.
- A lack of sufficient funding that would enable every child welfare agency in Wisconsin to have an assigned, full time Independent Living Coordinator.

3. *Discuss how the State involves the public and private sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve self-sufficiency.*

During this past year, the State coordinated and facilitated regular meetings with county, tribal, private, and other state agencies to collaborate, plan, and improve critical services for children and families. The PEP Implementation Team and PEP Out-of-Home Care Committee are used to seek input on independent living services in Wisconsin.

The DCFS also participates in meetings with the private and public sectors to focus on more specific issues pertaining to youth. The State IL Coordinator is a member of the Mental Health Transition Advisory Council that collaborates on mental health issues and services for youth transitioning to self-sufficiency. The coordinator also leads the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group to address the educational challenges and tackle post-secondary educational barriers faced by youth. Another collaborative group currently focusing on teen issues is the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse, Committee on Children and Youth. Membership for all of these groups includes private and public sector professionals. Independent Living roundtables with county, tribal, and private agency service providers are also utilized to discuss and address current policy and practice issues for adolescent youth.

The State IL Coordinator also arranges meetings to address specific topics and areas of interest related to older youth issues. These meetings connect the statewide IL Coordinators with other community agencies to help each other learn, collaborate, and better serve older youth. Group participants may include the public and private sector staff in addition to youth, families, and foster parents.

4. *Describe in detail how public and private organizations were consulted and involved in the development of this part of the CFSP.*

As described previously, the State coordinated and facilitated regular meetings with county, tribal, private, and other state agencies and stakeholders to collaborate, plan, and improve critical services for children and families. The planning efforts continue to use

the program framework laid out in the 2000 *Independent Living for Children in Out-of-Home Care* study

In addition, every county and tribal IL Coordinator, along with several private providers of IL services, were contacted directly to provide input for this five-year plan. All of their input is included throughout the various sections of the plan.

A Youth Advisory Council was created and began meeting in 2004. This group of youth aged 15-21 years is sharing their experiences in the child welfare system to positively influence and inform state planning and policy.

5. *Coordination with other Federal and State programs for youth and Indian tribes for Indian children.*

The DCFS coordinates with other programs for youth to ensure mutual awareness of programs and collaboration on the ongoing development and improvement of services for youth. The DCFS has a contract with the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) for IL eligible youth who are incarcerated. The DJC IL Coordinator participates in IL meetings to collaborate with child welfare agencies on services for former DJC youth. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) launched a pilot project in Milwaukee County to provide support and services for youth to gain education, training, and employment. Prior to project implementation, meetings were held with DCFS and BMCW staff to coordinate the involvement of foster care youth into the project and ongoing case management for those youth. The DCFS participates in the Mental Health Transition Advisory Council led by the Division of Disability and Elder Services to better serve youth with disabilities and mental health needs.

The DCFS and the Dept. of Health and Family Services' Tribal Affairs Unit (TAU) work with each other and the tribes to ensure tribes are involved and participate in all IL activities. Three Wisconsin Indian tribes receive IL and ETV Program allocations to provide IL services to tribal youth. Tribal youth that are not members of these three tribes will receive IL services through the county agencies with which the tribe has agreements. Independent Living Work Plans are due to the State annually and must include assurances that all counties are collaborating with the tribes to identify and engage tribal youth in IL services and ensure appropriate and meaningful collaboration in the development of IL services for tribal youth. The plan must describe the steps taken to achieve effective IL services for tribal youth.

All tribes receive formal notification of IL program changes and issues via the state numbered and information memo system. In addition, IL Coordinators for the tribes receive all informal notices and surveys generated by the State IL Coordinator. These communications have proven to be an effective way to quickly obtain and share information about current IL practices and challenges, and obtain input on planning and activities.

*6. Expansion of Medicaid eligibility to youth ages 18-20 years who have aged out of foster care.*

DCFS has requested since 2001 to extend Medicaid eligibility for youth aging out of out-of-home care as allowed under the Chafee Act, but the requests have not been approved through the state budget process due to budget constraints. Extensive efforts have been made by the Department's Office of Strategic Finance (OSF), Division of Health Care Finance (DHCF), and the DCFS to analyze the programmatic and fiscal impact of extending Medicaid eligibility. It was learned that in Wisconsin:

- Children in out-of-home care are eligible for Medical Assistance (MA) up to age 18. Wisconsin also provides MA coverage to youths, including youths living with their parents, up to age 19 under BadgerCare and Healthy Start. After reaching the age of 19 years, youth are no longer eligible for MA in Wisconsin, regardless of income, unless they are disabled, pregnant, or a caretaker of a minor relative.
- Approximately 300 teens age out of out-of-home care each year.
- Children and youth in out-of-home care have higher than average health care needs, particularly in the areas of mental health, chronic and recurrent diseases, and substance abuse. These needs, which continue and may intensify into adulthood, are unmet when the youth leave out-of-home care, turn 19, and lose MA. Youth who age out of the out-of-home care program do not have the financial, social, or family resources other youth might have to obtain medical treatment.

- The cost of expanding MA benefit will depend on how the proposal is phased in. An option is to phase in the expansion by age cohort. Specifically, in the first year, youth 19 or younger would be MA eligible. This would include all youth who already exited out-of-home but meet the eligibility criteria of having been in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the second year, youth 20 or younger would be eligible. Phasing in eligibility would reduce the additional state cost for the initial biennial budget period that the MA benefit is provided.
- Implementation of the extended MA eligibility would require one-time administrative costs to modify CARES and MMIS systems. Additional costs would be incurred for eWiSACWIS changes to capture health insurance data on these youth who are no longer in the child welfare system. Proposed federal reporting requirements for outcomes of youth leaving out-of-home care have included provisions that would require DCFS to track health insurance access for youth leaving out-of-home care.

***Continuing Efforts to Expand Medicaid Benefits for Foster Care Youth:*** The Governor's KidsFirst plan includes a goal to extend Medicaid coverage as allowed under the Chafee Act. Wisconsin Governor Doyle will seek to provide young adults with continuing health coverage under Medicaid until they reach 21 years of age.

#### *7. Determination of eligibility for benefits and services.*

To comply with the Chafee Act and address critical needs of older youth in out-of-home care, Wisconsin developed liberal eligibility criteria for independent living services. Agencies were notified of the criteria in DCFS Memo Series 2001-06. All youth in out-of-home care for at least six months after the age of 15 achieve eligibility for IL services. This also includes adopted youth that were in out-of-home care for the same amount of time and period prior to adoption. Youth retain eligibility for all supports and services until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays. These same youth that are enrolled in post-secondary education or training institutions on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays may receive additional ETV Program support up to age 23.

Because Wisconsin is a county-administered service system, counties and tribes may design and operate their IL programs as needed for local youth. Program differences may occur due to varied levels of funding, availability of caseworkers to focus on older youths' needs and services, and community resources available in the community and nearby. All programs must adhere to the State definition of IL eligibility for youth. All programs must address the identified needs and service areas described in the Chafee Act, the 2000 *Independent Living for Youth in Out-of-Home Care* study, and State numbered and information memos regarding IL programs.

Youth participation in IL services is voluntary. Cases for youth that leave care prior to age 18 due to reunification may be closed for further IL services where the youth and

family indicate there is no continued need for the service and/or they refuse to participate in the program.

All agencies must have IL services in place and be prepared to serve all youth up to 21 years who have achieved IL eligibility and up to 23 years for the ETV Program. Annual work plans indicate and verify that this is the case for all agencies contracting with the DCFS for IL services.

#### *8. Fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.*

Through implementation of Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan, the DCFS will organize review teams to monitor the performance of local agencies operating independent living programs. State-county contracts require those agencies to comply with all civil rights requirements applicable to federal funds. The DCFS collects information on independent living program activity and has regular meetings with local independent program coordinators to discuss program issues. The Department of Health and Family Services has regional offices that investigate complaints by clients regarding the services provided by local agencies.

The Wisconsin CFCIP has two major categories of benefits: the transitional housing room and board benefit and the scholarship program. Procedures are in place to ensure that program staff are aware of these benefits for youth and that all eligible youth are informed of these benefits and have an opportunity to request the assistance.

#### *9. Public Comments*

To develop the Chafee portion of the CFSP, the DCFS held public listening sessions and roundtable meetings with local agency staff to solicit comments on how CFCIP funds should be used. In addition, Independent Living Coordinators for counties, tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and some private agencies were solicited directly for input into this plan. All of their comments were considered and included in its development.

## **CFSP for FFY 2006 Tribal Child Welfare Program**

### *Coordination with Tribes*

For the past two years, DCFS staff and the Department Tribal Affairs Unit have been meeting bimonthly with representatives of the Indian Child Welfare departments of each of Wisconsin's eleven federally-recognized tribes. The purpose of these meetings is for the Department to obtain input on policies, procedures, and child welfare practices from tribal child welfare professionals. In conjunction with the Child and Family Services Review and the subsequent Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), tribal representatives have been involved through the PEP Core Team and through these bimonthly meetings. In addition to those tribal issues included in the PEP, this group has developed seven tribal priorities, which were attached to the PEP. An updated version of the Tribal Child Welfare Priorities is attached to this plan.

DCFS intends to continue meeting bimonthly with tribal child welfare staff to implement the seven priorities and to discuss and obtain input on other child welfare issues as they arise. For purposes of both the PEP and the CFSP, DCFS has established a PEP Implementation Team consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders within and outside of the child welfare system. Tribes are represented on the Implementation Team and the related PEP committees.

### *Assistance to Tribal Child Welfare Programs*

As part of the DCFS staffing for the PEP, DCFS created an Indian Child Welfare Consultant position to work with tribal child welfare agencies and counties to ensure compliance with ICWA and improve child welfare services to Indian children and families. DCFS is currently in the process of hiring the Indian Child Welfare Consultant. Once filled, the position will focus on implementing the tribal child welfare priorities and working with tribal child welfare agencies and counties on the entire range of child welfare program issues.

In addition, DCFS staff will continue to work with DHFS Tribal Affairs Unit staff in establishing relationships with and providing technical assistance and consultation to tribal agencies to assure that tribal social services programs are seamlessly connected with their child welfare programs to better serve Indian families.

The Secretary of DHFS meets at least annually with tribal leaders and will continue to do so. DCFS participates in meetings with the Department Secretary, state managers, and state program staff to consult with tribal leaders and tribal program staff to determine how the state and tribes can best assist each other in assuring that the needs of Indian families are met in the context of culturally appropriate services.

### *Codification of ICWA in State Statute*

The DCFS will seek to codify the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act into Chapters 48 (the Children's Code) and 938 (the Juvenile Justice Code) to facilitate an understanding of ICWA requirements on the parts of county and state caseworkers, supervisors, judges, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel, and other professionals involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

While awaiting this codification, DCFS will enhance our efforts to provide training on ICWA for all affected individuals. DCFS will also issue a numbered memo on related ICWA issues including notification requirements, placement preferences, and identification of children as Indian children. This will facilitate attempts to remedy problems identified by Indian child welfare staff in the processes related to the Child and Family Services Review, the Child and Family Services Plan, and the tribal priorities document

**CFSP for FFY 2006**  
**Title IV-E Foster Care Program**

DCFS has identified several activities that will be accomplished over the next five years that are designed to enhance and improve permanency planning practice and outcomes for children in terms of more rapid achievement of permanent placement and greater assurance that a permanent placement is, in fact, permanent for the child.

A. Administrative rule

DCFS continues to develop an administrative rule which creates and codifies requirements related to reasonable efforts and permanency planning. This rule, which will be identified as Chapter HFS 44, Adm. Code, will

- identify those tasks and activities related to the scheduling and notification of permanency plan reviews (6-month reviews) and permanency plan hearings (12-month reviews)
- describe the determinations that must be made at every review or hearing
- describe the content of permanency plans and permanency plan summary reports

B. Develop policies on the appropriate use of concurrent permanency planning

While the administrative rule described above is in the promulgation process, DCFS will issue a numbered memo regarding the timeliness and appropriate use of concurrent permanency planning and the establishment of a concurrent permanence goal. This memo will require that a concurrent permanence goal be established in preparation for the first permanency plan review to be held following the child's removal from his or her home. DCFS will also provide or arrange for training on this information for county, state, and private agency staff, permanency plan review panel members, judges, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel, and other affected individuals.

C. Information for permanency plan review panel members

DCFS will develop informational materials for use by review panel members that will clearly describe the role and function of the panel, the specific determinations that the panel must make at each review, and the type of training that must be provided to panel members. This latter activity will include DCFS reviewing materials developed by the National Association of Permanency Plan Reviewers.

D. Develop policies related to visitation/family interaction

At the present time, Wisconsin does not have adequate policies related to the purpose of visitation and family interaction, the need to develop and implement comprehensive plans related to visitation, incorporation of visitation plans into court orders and permanency plans, and under what conditions visitation plans can be adapted. DCFS will develop policies related to these issues to assure statewide uniformity and will provide training for county, state, and private agency staff on the information developed. Information on

visitation and family interaction will also be included in materials to be provided to the parents of children removed from their homes.

E. Develop policies related to locating and involving relatives of children removed from their homes

Current Wisconsin statutes and regulations are inadequate and unclear regarding the efforts that must be undertaken to determine paternity, seek acknowledgement of paternity, locate and involve relatives of both custodial and non-custodial parents, share information with potential relative caregivers, and other topics related to enhancing efforts to achieve permanence for children through the use of relative placements. This effort will be a multifaceted approach that will involve proposing statutory change, developing administrative rules, revising child welfare standards, issuing numbered memos, and providing or arranging for training for all actors in the child welfare system. It will also involve reviewing and, as necessary, improving the operation and awareness of the state paternal interest registry.

F. Enhance county capacity to move cases to permanence

In many counties in Wisconsin, particularly smaller, more rural counties, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel often find that the time and expertise required to pursue terminations of parental rights and other legal actions related to permanence are not available. This can result in children not moving to permanence within acceptable time frames. This is frustrating to county child welfare agencies that have exhausted their available efforts and cannot proceed without court action. In 2003, Wisconsin initiated a program under which legal services could be enhanced through the use of Title IV-E funds. Presently, approximately 20 counties are making use of this program. DCFS will continue to work with counties to expand use of IV-E support for legal services.

## **CFSP for FFY 2006 Kinship Care Program**

DCFS will continue to work towards providing increased support to kinship care providers. This includes working to improve the financial assistance and other support made available to relative caregivers.

The TANF Kinship Care payment for eligible children and relative caregivers remains at \$215 per child per month. This amount has not been changed since the Kinship Care program was created in 1997. During the 2005-2009 period, efforts will continue to assess this rate and determine if an increase in the payment is possible. Options that will be considered include a higher monthly payment for Long-Term Kinship Care (LTKC) cases where the child is permanently placed with the relative.

In addition, two policy issues have been identified and targeted to improve Kinship Care services. The issues are included in proposed legislation and are as follows:

1. Revising the definition of a Kinship Care relative to include language stating that a relative to one of the children is a potentially eligible relative caregiver to all of the children in that sibling group. By identifying the potential caregiver as an eligible relative, Kinship Care for all of the children could be approved which is not possible under current legislation. This proposed change achieves the desired outcome of keeping sibling groups together and supporting familial relationships for children at risk.
2. Ensuring that relatives requesting Kinship Care are entitled to receive an application form and are allowed to participate in eligibility processing for the program. Currently in areas where there are shortages of Kinship Care funding, waiting lists, higher numbers of voluntary cases, etc., agencies may limit or refuse applications to inquiring relatives. Consequently, children and relatives that may be eligible for Kinship Care payments are denied access to financial assistance and the potentially eligible Kinship Care population in each tribe or county is not identified and remains under-represented by the data. This directly impacts children, families and the local agencies' allocations for Kinship Care, which are estimated using the eligible population in each community.

## **CFSP for FFY 2006**

### **Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare**

The BMCW continues to place great emphasis on a family-centered approach to case planning and case management and has adopted the Coordinated Services Team model to support these goals and values. The *BMCW Standards of Practice* continue to be updated to support the consistency, quality, and timeliness of child protective services and out-of-home care. The *Standards* include assessment of and response to ensure child safety and the development and implementation of service plans to support family change. Contractor performance is monitored through comprehensive case and program reviews by the BMCW Program Evaluation Managers.

#### *Workforce Development*

Continued efforts are underway to identify and address issues associated with the recruitment and retention of the child welfare workforce. The BMCW is approaching this important issue by taking steps to understand factors leading to staff turnover and coordinating with national experts, such as consultants from the Child Welfare League of America.

Current efforts underway to address staff retention and turnover include:

- Proposed salary increases for Ongoing Case Management staff in each year of the 2005 - 07 biennium budget
- Proposed funding for training and support for current and new staff through a training academy
- Internal work groups on Staff Retention and Staff Recruitment reviewing workforce issues and making recommendations:
  - Examples include improving supervision through leadership development and, strengthened use of mentors
  - Recognizing the importance of staff retention - areas that are not directly related to salaries (unlike recruitment) but the agency has the ability and flexibility to improve
  - Identify issues surrounding preventable turnover, decreasing unnecessary turnover. As an example a new employee is hired, but after a period of time the employee terminates his/her employment once they understand the demands of the job

In December 2004, the Division of Children and Family Services began implementation of a partnership to address child welfare workforce recruitment and retention issues in Milwaukee. The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, in partnership with the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), University of Chicago Chapin Hall and Frances Pitt and Associates are working together with the BMCW and its private agency partners to accomplish several goals. They are using focus groups, a web-based survey, and making recommendations about salaries, as they get started. The BMCW will identify and prioritize actionable strategies to improve retention of child welfare staff.

*Part-time Master's Degree in Social Work Program Available to BMCW Staff* - At the request of DCFS, the UW-Milwaukee School of Social Welfare began offering three of its first year curriculum MSW courses for BMCW staff. The spring 2005 class (January 24 – May 21) is Social Work 705 – Human Behavior and Social Welfare. The first summer 2005 class (May 31 – July 11) will be Social Work 708 – Social Work Methods I with Individuals and Families. The third course (July 11 – August 20) will be determined at a later date. BMCW is covering part of the cost of these courses so tuition will be less than the usual UWM rate. All three courses will be offered at one of the Bureau sites. To accommodate staff work schedules, the classes will be held in the evenings or during the day on Saturday. More than 70 staff indicated interest and 38 have registered to participate in January classes.

*Consultant Group Assistance* – BMCW is using assistance from an outside consulting group led by Jess McDonald clinical professor at the Children and Family Research Center at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana to understand the dynamics of workforce issues. The consultants held listening sessions and Q &A sessions with staff that perform different jobs within the BMCW. BMCW is currently reviewing the recommendations provided in the report.

## **XI. FISCAL INFORMATION FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN**

This section of the plan includes information on state maintenance of effort as required under Title IV-B and proposed budgets for the FFY 2006 Title IV-B Subparts I and II, CAPTA, and Chafee CFCIP and ETV funds.

### **Maintenance of Effort for Children and Family Services Programs**

Services to children and families are provided in Wisconsin primarily through county human or social service agencies. Counties typically have unified human service departments that are responsible for a broad range of state-mandated services. Tribes also operate human service programs and receive state funds for those services.

The primary method of funding children and family services is through the Community Aids program. Under Community Aids, an allocation that includes IV-B Subpart I funds, state tax dollars, and other funding sources goes to county and tribal human service agencies. IV-B Subpart II and Chafee funds are allocated to counties and tribes separately. In addition, counties and tribes provide funds from local sources to match the state allocation and provide additional services.

The Department's Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) provides information on counts of human service clients and counties submit expenditure reports – the "942" and "943" reports -- that allow expenditures to be matched with client counts. This information is used as the basis for Social Services Block Grant reporting and is also used for maintenance of effort reporting for Title IV-B. The following table summarizes the county expenditures for CY 2003.

For the Title IV-B Subpart I program, Wisconsin meets the maintenance of effort requirement by spending in excess of the base, non-supplantation amount from 1979 when Subpart I funds were first received.

For the Title IV-B Subpart II program, Wisconsin meets the maintenance of effort requirement by spending in excess of the base non-supplantation amount from 1992 when Subpart II funds were first received.

COUNTY SPENDING ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES (All Funds)—CY 2003

Funding Categories	Abused & Neglected Children	Children & Family Services
Child Day Care *	\$ 1,337,031	\$2,272,349
Supportive Home Care	0	172,601
Specialized Transportation	1,437,007	174,507
Comm. Prevention Access & Outreach	4,450,484	7,465,674
Community Living/Support Services	23,501,941	15,851,568
Investigations and Assessments	58,384,062	7,603,455
Work Related & Day Services	261,682	1,796,905
Community Residential Services	73,510,054	11,557,346
Community Treatment Services	18,622,386	7,927,771
Inpatient & Institutional Care	17,257,723	3,945,416
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$198,762,370</b>	<b>\$58,767,592</b>
Clients Served (unduplicated count) **	37,931	33,739

\* Child care for work or training using TANF or Child Care Block Grant funds is not included. The childcare expenditures reflect primarily crisis/respite child care.

\*\* Client counts do not reflect client activities reported in eWiSACWIS system.

These services are available statewide through county social and human services agencies and are targeted to families who come to the attention of the agency through child abuse and neglect reports, referrals from other agencies, or self-referrals for assistance. These figures do not include services provided to children and families in other target groups, such as developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed.

Services are also provided through direct contracts between vendor agencies and the Department. Service categories, funding amounts, geographic distribution, and target groups are summarized in the following table.

Wisconsin has maintained or increased the state funding available to counties for child welfare and other family support services. In addition, the state has placed a maintenance-of-effort requirement on counties for programs for which the state provides funding that is enforced through contract requirements and program monitoring.

The following are other programs that serve the target population for the Title IV-B program and contribute to the state maintenance of effort.

#### OTHER CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS

<b>Program</b>	<b>Category of Service</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Geographic Distribution</b>	<b>Target group</b>
Brighter Futures (BFI)	BFI is a comprehensive prevention initiative to improve outcomes for youth	3.4 million	9 counties including Milwaukee, 1 tribe	High risk youth, including pregnant and parenting teens
Safe & Drug Free Schools	Evidence-based youth prevention services.	1.44 million	Statewide service	Youth & families
Community Services Block Grant	Multiple, geographically based low-income programs	7.7 million	69 counties statewide/11 Tribes	Low-income individuals and families
Adoption Information Center	Prevention/ Support Services	75,000	Statewide service	General public
Adoption Exchange	Prevention/ Support Services	166,000	Statewide service	Prospective adoptive families

Wisconsin also funds family support services through programs administered by the Children's Trust Fund (Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board). Those programs are summarized below.

#### CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND PROGRAMS

<b>Program</b>	<b>Category of Service</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Geographic Distribution</b>	<b>Target group</b>
Family Resource Programs	Prevention/ Support Services	1,040,000	13 programs in 12 counties (2 in Milwaukee)	Parents and their children birth to age 3
Access & Visitation	Support & Visitation Resources	148,000	8 Programs in 8 Counties	Children and non-custodial parents, primarily fathers
Right From the Start	Prevention/ Support Services	320,000	4 programs in 4 counties	Parents and their children birth to age 3
CAN Prevention Grants	Prevention/ Support Services	420,000	21 programs in all regions of the state	Varies with program

#### State Match Requirements

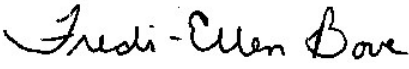
The Title IV-B program requires a 25% state match for Subpart I and II funds. The Chafee program requires a 20% match for CCFCIP and ETV funds. No match is required for CAPTA funds.

The state match for Title IV-B and Chafee is described in the following budget sheets.

#### CFS - 101 Forms

The CFS-101 Form, parts 1 and 2, are included with this plan.

**CFS-101, Part I: Annual Budget Request For Title IV-B, Subpart 1 & 2 Funds, CAPTA, and  
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program  
Fiscal Year 2006, October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006 – Submitted 9/1/05**

1. State: <b>WISCONSIN</b>	2. EIN: <b>39-600-0469</b>
3. Address: <b>Dept. of Health and Family Services P.O. Box 8916 Madison, WI 53708-8916</b>	4. Submission: [X] New [ ] Revision
5. Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds (25% State match required).	<b>\$5,311,702 (\$1,770,657 match)</b>
6. Total Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Funds. (This amount should equal the sum of lines a - f.) (25% State match required.)	<b>\$5,376,364 (\$1,800,000 match)</b>
a) Total Family Preservation Services.	<b>\$1,075,273</b>
b) Total Family Support Services.	<b>\$1,075,273</b>
c) Total Time-Limited Family Reunification Services.	<b>\$1,075,273</b>
d) Total Adoption Promotion and Support Services.	<b>\$1,075,273</b>
e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning).	<b>\$806,454</b>
f) Total Administration (not to exceed 10% of estimated allotment).	<b>\$268,818</b>
7. Re-allotment of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds for States (25% State match required). a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. <b>N/A - Wisconsin will use all Subpart 2 funds.</b> b) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting. <b>Wisconsin will accept additional Subpart 2 funds if funds are available.</b>	
8. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic State Grant Only (no State match required) Estimated CAPTA BSG Amount <b>\$519,459</b> plus additional allocation, as available. <b>Wisconsin will accept additional CAPTA funds if funds are available.</b>	
9. Estimated Chafee Program Funds (20% State match required).	
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)	<b>\$2,012,108 (\$503,027 match)</b>
Chafee Education and Training Vouchers.	<b>\$644,474 (\$161,119 match)</b>
10. Re-allotment of CFCIP Funds (20% State match required). a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out CFCIP <b>N/A - Wisconsin will use all CFCIP funds.</b> b) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting <b>Wisconsin will accept additional CFCIP funds if funds are available.</b>	
11. Certification by State Agency and/or Indian Tribal Organization.  The State Agency submits the above estimates and request for funds under title IV-B, subpart 1 and/or 2, of the Social Security Act, CAPTA BSG and CFCIP, and agrees that expenditures will be made in accordance with the Child and Family Services Plan, which has been jointly developed with, and approved by, the ACF Regional Office, for the Fiscal Year ending September 30.	
Signature and Title of State Agency Official   Fredi Bove, Office of Strategic Finance Director	Signature and Title of Regional Office Official
Date <b>8/30/05</b>	Date

**CFS-101, PART II: ANNUAL SUMMARY OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

OMB APPROVAL # 0980-0047

 State WISCONSIN For FFY 2006, OCTOBER 1, 2005 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2006 Submitted 9/1/05

											(k) NUMBER TO BE SERVED  [X] Families [ ]Individuals	(l) POP. TO BE SERVED	(m) GEOG. AREA TO BE SERVED
SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	TITLE IV-B		(c) CAPTA	(d) CFCIP & ETV	(e) TITLE IV-E	(f) TITLE XX (SSBG)	(g) TITLE IV-A TANF	(h) Title XIX (Medicaid)	(i) Other Fed Prog	(j) State Local Donated Funds	100,000	Varies with Program	Statewide
	(a) I-CWS	(b) II-PSSF											
1) PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES (FAMILY SUPPORT)	792	1075				1,770			4,160	23,000	40,000	Reports of abuse/neglect	Statewide/ Reservation
2) PROTECTIVE SERVICES	1279					560				21,200			
3) CRISIS INTERVENTION (FAMILY PRESERVATION)		1075				1,730			1,000	4,200			
(A) PREPLACEMENT PREVENTION (Other SSF) *	2047	806					7,000			24,100	10,000	All Children in foster care	Statewide/ Reservation
(B)REUNIFICATION SERVICES	986					590				8,000			
4. TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION		1075								20,000			
5. ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES		1075								30,500		All eligible children	Statewide/ Reservation
6) FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE: (A) FOSTER FAMILY & RELATIVE FOSTER CARE					13,754						4,200		
(B) GROUP/INST CARE											300		Statewide/ Reservation
7) ADOPTION SUBSIDY PMTS.					28,463						3,400		
8) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES **				2,472									
9) ADMIN & MGMT	207	269	118	227	42,147								
10) STAFF TRAINING			401		2,858								
11) FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING													
12) ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING													
13) CHILD CARE RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (Crisis Respite Care)										5,000	5,000	Low Income Families	
14) TOTAL	5,311	5,376	519	2,699	87,222	4,650	7,000		5,160	136,000			

\* The other services portion of IV-B Part II is shown under pre-placement prevention.

\*\* The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers is shown under Independent Living Services

**Title IV-B, Subpart 1 - Child Welfare Program Services**  
**Proposed FFY 2006 Budget**  
**Submitted 9/1/05**

<b>Administration</b>	<b>FED Funds</b>
Program Staff	
Staff salaries (3.0 FTE)	\$ 143,680
Fringe (36%)	51,725
Supplies and Services	82
Indirect (8.3% of salary for 2.5 FTE) (4.9% of salary for 0.5 FTE)	11,143
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>	<b>\$ 206,630</b>
<b>Program Services</b>	
Community Aids Allocations	\$ 3,652,895
Allocated to counties and tribes	
Youth Aids	1,024,892
Allocated to counties	
Runaway Program	427,285
Allocated to local programs	
<b>Subtotal Program Services</b>	<b>\$ 5,105,072</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 5,311,702</b>

Note: The proposed FFY 2006 budget is based on the final FFY 2005 grant award.

Required State Match: 25% of total expenditures = **\$1,770,567**

Total Program Funding = **\$7,082,269**

Sources of Match:

- County child welfare agency expenditures of state funds provide through Community Aids and local tax levy funds for child protective services and in-home services to families.

**Title IV-B, Subpart II - Family Preservation and Support Services Budget**  
**Proposed Budget for FFY 2006**  
**Submitted 9/1/05**

<b>Administration</b>		
Program Staff (2.0 FTE)		
Salary		\$ 115,000
Fringe (36%)		51,500
Supplies and Contracted Services		106,435
Indirect (8.3% of salary)		10,275
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>		<b>\$ 283,210</b>
<b>Program Services</b>		
Family Preservation (20%)		\$ 1,075,273
To local agency SSF programs		
Family Support (20%)		1,075,273
To local agency SSF programs		
Time-Limited Reunification (20%)		1,075,273
To local agency SSF programs		
Adoptions (20%)		1,075,273
To state adoption program services		
Other Services		792,062
Local Agency PSSF Programs (*)	142 139	
Coordinated Service Teams	100,000	
POCAN Technical Assistance	160,000	
Tribal Training Partnership	68,000	
PEP Implementation and program enhancements	321,923	
<b>Subtotal Program Services</b>		<b>\$ 5,093,154</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 5,376,364</b>

\* These funds are used by local agencies for Family Preservation, Family Support or Time-Limited Reunification services.

The proposed FFY 2006 budget is based on the final FFY 2005 award, including the mandatory and discretionary portions of the IV-B Subpart II award.

**IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families**  
**State Match Calculation**  
**FFY 2006 Plan – Submitted 9/1/05**

	<b>IV-B Funds</b>	<b>State Match</b>	<b>Total Program</b>
Family Preservation	\$ 1,075,273	\$ 360,000	\$ 1,435,273
Family Support	1,075,273	360,000	1,435,273
Reunification	1,075,273	360,000	1,435,273
Adoption	1,075,273	360,000	1,435,273
Other Services	806,454	360,000	1,166,454
Subtotal, Program Services	5,107,546	1,800,000	6,097,546
State Administration	268,818	N/A	268,818
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 5,376,364</b>	<b>\$1,800,000</b>	<b>\$ 7,176,364</b>

Notes on State Match:

1. The majority of IV-B funds are allocated to counties and tribes to operate the family support, preservation and reunification portions of the program. Counties and tribes are also allocated funds for other activities with the requirement that these funds be used for the family support, preservation and reunification activities. Local program administration is limited to 10% of the local allocation and included in the Other Services category. Match funds are provided by counties agencies using state funds provided through the Community Aids of Children and Families Incentive programs along with local tax levy funds. The estimated match amounts are based on local agency expenditures as reported to DCFS. The actual amount of local agency expenditures exceeds the minimum match required for the Subpart II program.
2. The IV-B funds for adoption program services are used in conjunction with state funds and adoption incentive funds. The estimated match for the adoption services portion of the Subpart II program is based on local agency expenditures for post-adoption services provided to families adopting special needs children.
3. The other services category includes funds allocated to local agencies, either as part of the PSSF program or for programs such as BMCW Network Services, Coordinated Service Team development and POCAN training and technical assistance services. The estimated match for other services consists of local agency expenditures for family support, preservation and reunification services or local agency expenditures for the specific projects such as Coordinated Service Teams or POCAN.
4. No state match is provided for state administration. The match amounts for other Subpart II program components are calculated based on the total state match needed for the program.

**Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act  
Proposed FFY 2006 Budget  
Submitted 9/1/05**

<b>Administration</b>		<b>FED Funds</b>
Program Staff (1 FTE)		
Salary		\$ 70,800
Fringe (36%)		25,488
Supplies and Services		45,540
Indirect (8.3% of salary)		5,876
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>		<b>\$ 147,704</b>
<b>Program Services</b>		
Training and technical assistance		\$ 371,755
<b>Subtotal Program Services</b>		<b>\$ 371,755</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 519,459</b>

Note: The proposed FFY 2006 budget is based on the final FFY 2005 grant award.

**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)  
Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program  
Proposed FFY 2006 Budget  
Submitted 9/1/05**

	<b>CFCIP</b>	<b>ETV</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>	\$ 2,012,108	\$ 644,474
<b>State Administration</b>		
Salary and Fringe	131,630	
Supplies and Services	28,525	2,000
Internal Services	37,400	13,000
Indirect	10,000	
Conferences	4,825	
<b>Subtotal</b>	212,380	15,000
<b>Local Services</b>		
Grants to Counties/BMCW	1,722,468	371,671
Allocations to Tribes	43,106	3,674
Div of Juvenile Corrections	34,154	9,381
Scholarship Program		244,748
<b>Subtotal</b>	1,799,728	629,474
<b>Total Program</b>	<b>2,012,108</b>	<b>644,474</b>
<b>State/Local Match (20%)</b>	<b>503,027</b>	<b>161,119</b>
<b>Total Program Funding</b>	<b>\$ 2,515,135</b>	<b>\$ 805,593</b>

Note: The proposed CFCIP FFY 2006 budget is based on the final FFY 2005 grant award.  
The proposed ETV FFY 2006 budget is based on the estimated 2006 allocation.

Sources of Match:

- County child welfare agency expenditures of state funds in Community Aids and local tax levy funds for Independent Living services.
- Department of Corrections expenditures of state funds for Independent Living services.

## **XII. ASSURANCES**

The Department, on behalf of the Governor, must provide assurances that Wisconsin is in compliance with federal requires for Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee. The assurances are included in this section of the plan.

The following assurances are included:

- Title IV-B

- CAPTA

- Chafee CFCIP

- Chafee ETV

## **TITLE IV-B CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ASSURANCES**

The assurances listed below are in 45 CFR 1357.15(c) and title IV-B sections 422(b)(10), 422(b)(12), section 422 (b) (14), section 432(a)(4), 432 (a)(7) and 432(a)(9). These assurances will remain in effect during the period of the current five-year CFSP.

1. The State assures that it will participate in any evaluations the Secretary of HHS may require.
2. The State assures that it will administer the CFSP in accordance with methods determined by the Secretary to be proper and efficient.
3. The State assures that it has a plan for the training and use of paid paraprofessional staff, with particular emphasis on the full-time or part-time employment of low-income persons, as community service aides; and a plan for the use of non-paid or partially paid volunteers in providing services and in assisting any advisory committees established by the State.
4. The State assures that standards and requirements imposed with respect to child care under title XX shall apply with respect to day care services, if provided under the CFSP, except insofar as eligibility for such services is involved.
5. the State assures that it is operating, to the satisfaction of the Secretary:
  - a statewide information system from which can be readily determined the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care;
  - a case review system (as defined in section 475(5) for each child receiving foster care under the supervision of the State;
  - a service program designed to help children—where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement; and
  - a pre-placement preventive services program designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families; and
  - The State assures that it has implemented policies and administrative and judicial procedures for children abandoned at or shortly after birth that are necessary to enable permanent decisions to be made expeditiously with respect to the placement of such children.
6. The State assures that plans will be developed for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

7. The State assures that it will collect and report information on children who are adopted from other countries and who enter State custody as a result of the disruption of an adoptive placement, or the dissolution of an adoption. Such information will include the reasons for disruption or dissolution, the agencies who handled the placement or adoption, the plans for the child, and the number of children to whom this pertains.
8. The State assures that no more than 10 percent of expenditures under the plan for any fiscal year with respect to which the State is eligible for payment under section 434 of the Act for the fiscal year shall be for administrative costs and that the remaining expenditures shall be for programs of family preservation services, community-based family support services, time-limited reunification services and adoption promotion and support services, with significant portions of such expenditures for each such program.
9. The State assures that Federal funds provided to the State for title IV-B, Subpart 2 programs will not be used to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for existing services and activities.
10. The State assures that, in administering and conducting service programs under this plan, the safety of the children to be served shall be of paramount concern.

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi-Ellen Bove Date: 8/30/05  
Fredie-Allen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(ACF Regional Representative)

## **CAPTA ASSURANCES FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAM**

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is enforcing a State law, or has in effect and is operating a Statewide program, relating to child abuse and neglect which includes:

- 1) provisions or procedures for reporting known or suspected instances of child abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(i));
- 2) policies and procedures (including appropriate referrals to child protection service systems and for other appropriate services) to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers involved in the delivery or care of such infants notify the child protective services system of the occurrence of such condition in such infants (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ii));
- 3) the development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iii));
- 4) procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iv));
- 5) triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service (section 106(b)(2)(A)(v));
- 6) procedures for immediate steps to be taken to ensure and protect the safety of the abused or neglected child, and of any other child under the same care who may also be in danger of abuse or neglect; and ensuring their placement in a safe environment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vi));
- 7) provisions for immunity from prosecution under State and local laws and regulations for individuals making good faith reports of suspected or known instances of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vii));
- 8) methods to preserve the confidentiality of all records in order to protect the rights of the child and of the child's parents or guardians, including requirements ensuring that reports and records made and maintained pursuant to the purposes of CAPTA shall only be made available to--
  - a) individuals who are the subject of the report;
  - b) Federal, State, or local government entities, or any agent of such entities, as described in number 9 below;
  - c) child abuse citizen review panels;
  - d) child fatality review panels;

- e) a grand jury or court, upon a finding that information in the record is necessary for the determination of an issue before the court or grand jury; and
  - f) other entities or classes of individuals statutorily authorized by the State to receive such information pursuant to a legitimate State purpose (section 106(b)(2)(A)(viii);
- 9) provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ix));
- 10) provisions which allow for public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality (section 106(b)(2)(A)(x));
- 11) the cooperation of State law enforcement officials, court of competent jurisdiction, and appropriate State agencies providing human services in the investigation, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xi));
- 12) provisions requiring, and procedures in place that facilitate the prompt expungement of any records that are accessible to the general public or are used for purposes of employment or other background checks in cases determined to be unsubstantiated or false, except that nothing in this section shall prevent State child protective services agencies from keeping information on unsubstantiated reports in their casework files to assist in future risk and safety assessment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xii));
- 13) provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role, and who may be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate who has received training appropriate to that role (or both), shall be appointed to represent the child in such proceedings—
  - (a) to obtain firsthand, a clear understanding of the situation and needs of the child; and
  - (b) to make recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii));
- 14) the establishment of citizen review panels in accordance with subsection 106(c) (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiv));
- 15) provisions, procedures, and mechanisms –
  - (a) for the expedited termination of parental rights in the case of any infant determined to be abandoned under State law; and
  - (b) by which individuals who disagree with an official finding of abuse or neglect can appeal such finding (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xv));

- 16) provisions, procedures, and mechanisms that assure that the State does not require reunification of a surviving child with a parent who has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction--
- a) to have committed a murder (which would have been an offense under section 1111(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
  - b) to have committed voluntary manslaughter (which would have been an offense under section 1112(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
  - c) to have aided or abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such murder or voluntary manslaughter; or
  - d) to have committed a felony assault that results in the serious bodily injury to the surviving child or another child of such parent (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvi));
- 17) provisions that assure that, upon the implementation by the State of the provisions, procedures, and mechanisms under number 16 above, conviction of any one of the felonies listed in number 16 above constitute grounds under State law for the termination of parental rights of the convicted parent as to the surviving children (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvii));
- 18) provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii));
- 19) provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix));
- 20) provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx));
- 21) provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi));
- 22) not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36), provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii));

- 23) procedures for responding to the reporting of medical neglect (including instances of withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions), procedures or programs, or both (within the State child protective services system), to provide for--
- a) coordination and consultation with individuals designated by and within appropriate health care facilities;
  - b) prompt notification by individuals designated by and within appropriate health-care facilities of cases of suspected medical neglect (including instances of withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions); and
  - c) authority, under State law, for the State child protective services system to pursue any legal remedies, including the authority to initiate legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, as may be necessary to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions (section 106(b)(2)(B)); and
- 24) authority under State law to permit the child protective services system of the State to pursue any legal remedies, including the authority to initiate legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, to provide medical care or treatment for a child when such care or treatment is necessary to prevent or remedy serious harm to the child, or to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatments from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions (section 113).

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi-Ellen Bove Date: 8/30/05  
Fredie-Allen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(ACF Regional Representative)

## **CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM ASSURANCES**

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions to effectively implement the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program are in place:

1. The State will provide assistance and services to youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(A)];
2. Not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment for a fiscal year will be expended for room and board for youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(B)];
3. None of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(C)];
4. The State will use training funds provided under the program of Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance to provide training to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and will, to the extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents [Section 477(b)(3)(D)];
5. The State will adequately prepare prospective foster parents with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child before a child, under the supervision of the State, is placed with prospective foster parents and that such preparation will be continued, as necessary, after the placement of the child. [Section 471(a), as amended];
6. The State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(E)];
7. The State will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under part B of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974); abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies [Section 477(b)(3)(F)];

8. Each Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan; there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes; and benefits and services under the programs will be made available to Indian youth in the State on the same basis as to other youth in the State [Section 477(b)(3)(G)];
9. Adolescents participating in the program under this section will participate directly in designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living and the adolescents will be required to accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program [Section 477(b)(3)(H)]; and
10. The State has established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(I)].

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi-Ellen Bove Date: 8/30/05  
Fredie-Allen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(ACF Regional Representative)

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM ASSURANCES**  
**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions will be implemented as of September 30, 2003:

1. The State will comply with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i).
2. The State has described methods it will use to:
  - ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this and any other Federal assistance program does not exceed the total cost of attendance; and
  - avoid duplication of benefits under this and any other Federal assistance program, as defined in section 477(3)(b)(J).

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi-Ellen Bove Date: 8/30/05  
Fredie-Allen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(ACF Regional Representative)

## **PLAN ATTACHMENTS**

### Attached Documents

The following documents referenced in the narrative of the plan are attached.

1. DHFS Organizational Chart
2. DCFS Organizational Chart
3. Adoption Program Report for CY 2004
4. BMCW Corrective Action Plan
  - 4.A Children's Family and Community Partnerships
  - 4.B La Causa
  - 4.C First Choice for Children
  - 4.D Intake and Initial Assessment
5. Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports
  - 5.A Marathon County
  - 5.B LaCrosse County
  - 5.C Outagamie County
6. Tribal Child Welfare Issues (updated 1/05)
7. DHFS Tribal Consultation Policy (3/05)

### Web Site References

The plan references web sites for other information. These web sites include:

The Wisconsin PEP can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>.

The Kids First agenda can be found at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docs/kidsfirst.pdf>.

Statutory language for CAPTA can be found at <http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/quickfind.html>

Note: To use the Folio on-line statutes select Chapter 48 Children's Code and enter in the appropriate statute number.